THE FLYING REPORTER

Lewis E. Theiss

Glenna Jones
from
Mrs Smith

THE FLYING REPORTER

BOOKS BY

LEWIS E. THEISS

HIS BIG BROTHER. A Story of the Struggles and Triumphs of a Little Son of Liberty. 320 pages.

THE SECRET WIRELESS. A Story of the Camp Brady Patrol. 320 pages.

THE YOUNG WIRELESS OPERATOR—AFLOAT. How Roy Mercer Won His Spurs in the Merchant Marine. 320 pages.

THE YOUNG WIRELESS OPERATOR—AS A FIRE PATROL. The Story of a Young Wireless Amateur Who Made Good as a Fire Patrol. 352 pages.

THE YOUNG WIRELESS OPERATOR—AFLOAT. THE OYSTER FLEET. How Alec Cunningham Won His Way to the Top in the Oyster Business. 328 pages.

THE YOUNG WIRELESS OPERATOR—WITH THE U. S. SECRET SERVICE. A Story of Secret Service Work in Which Every Incident is Based Upon Actual Occurrence. 310 pages.

THE WIRELESS OPERATOR—WITH THE U. S. COAST GUARD. A Remarkable Picture of the Service Performed by the Patrols Along Our Coast. 320 pages.

THE FLUME IN THE MOUNTAINS. The Story of the Building of a Great Power Plant. 320 pages.

ALOFT IN THE SHENANDOAH II. Serving with Uncle Sam's largest dirigible. 320 pages.

KEEPERS OF THE SEA. A Story of the Lighthouse Service. 320 pages.

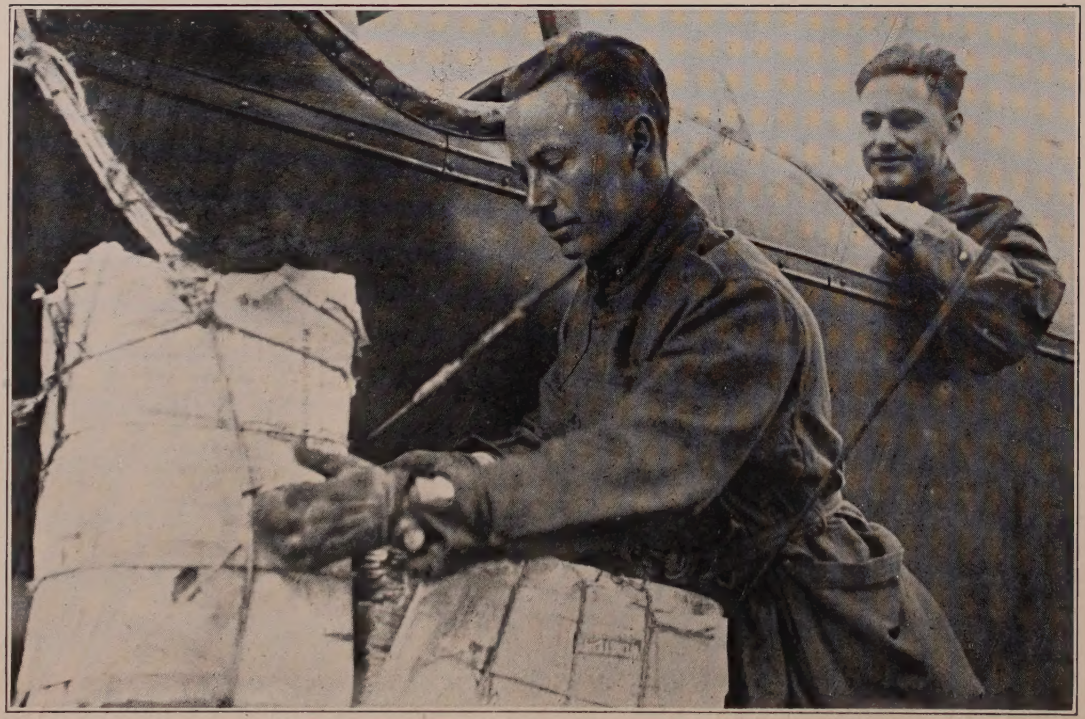
IN THE AIR MAIL SERVICE

PILOTING THE U. S. AIR MAIL. 320 pages.

THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST MAIL PLANE. 320 pages.

TRAILING THE AIR MAIL BANDIT. 320 pages.

Cloth Bound—Illustrated by Colored Plates and Photographs



THE FLYING REPORTER

By
LEWIS E. THEISS

Illustrated by
HAROLD CUE

W. A. WILDE COMPANY
PUBLISHERS BOSTON

Copyrighted, 1930,
BY W. A. WILDE COMPANY
All rights reserved

THE FLYING REPORTER

Made in United States of America

FOREWORD

IT will probably come as a surprise to many readers to know that when this story was written, more than one hundred American newspapers owned and operated airplanes as a regular part of their news-gathering equipment. By the time this tale is between covers, there will doubtless be many additional planes cleaving the skies in the swift search for news, in the carrying of relief to marooned and endangered human beings, in the hunt for those who are lost, in the transportation of news photographs, and not infrequently in the carrying of important papers and documents. For although the primary end of the newspaper is to collect and distribute news, it also carries on a host of activities for the direct benefit of mankind.

Some of these news planes are elaborately equipped for their work, with desks and typewriters for reporters, darkrooms and developing equipment for photographers, and special equip-

ment for the taking of aerial photographs. Some of these planes ordinarily carry as many as four men—a pilot, a mechanic, a camera man, and a reporter. Thus they are equipped for almost any emergency.

Among the eight airplanes used by the Hearst newspaper forces to "cover" the arrival of the *Graf Zeppelin* on the Pacific Coast were some huge tri-motored ships. One of these was equipped like a real news room. It carried one reporter, one photographer, one announcer, one radio operator and technician. The plane flew two hundred miles along the coast, and sent descriptive stories direct by radio to the *Examiner* office in Los Angeles, where a short-wave station copied the despatches and rushed them to the editors at their desks.

It would be easy enough to "invent" adventures for news fliers, but it would be foolish to do so for the reason that few "made-up" stories could equal in interest the actual experiences of flying reporters. Consequently, practically all the material in this book is based upon actual occurrences.

The bit of Warren Long's parachute that Jimmy Donnelly prized so highly is merely the counterpart of a piece of the parachute of that fine young pilot, the late Thomas Nelson. It is from the parachute he had when he stepped out of a burning mail plane at Ringtown, Pa., in the fall of 1929. This keepsake was given to me by Dr. Leigh Breisch, of Lewisburg, Pa., with whose father Pilot Nelson spent several hours after that thrilling leap. His parachute was partly burned, and the bit of silk in my possession is scorched by fire. It is a prized possession, for I knew and greatly admired the dauntless young man who wore it.

The descriptions of the radio beacons are as accurate as the writer can make them. The installation of these beacons marks a great step forward in the development of flying. Radio beacons are being erected as fast as possible along the entire transcontinental airway, and will also be used to guide befogged fliers on other routes.

In the course of this story Jimmy Donnelly awakens a sleeping family whose home was afire, by diving at the house and making as much noise

with his plane as possible. On various occasions Air Mail pilots have done exactly this thing. That excellent flier and former Air Mail pilot, Paul Collins, is one of the airmen who performed this trick.

Covering floods, scouting out the marooned and helpless, and making aerial surveys of districts suffering from great calamities, is a commonplace among news fliers. Time and again they have carried food and medicine and clothing, and even newspapers, to persons marooned in floods or on ice-blocked islands or on stranded ships. In this story Jimmy Donnelly transports the stereotype matrixes from a flooded newspaper office to another newspaper plant miles distant, where the stereotype plates are cast and the edition printed. This thing actually happened in the Middle West, when a flier took the "mats" of the Hutchinson (Kans.) *News and Herald* to the plant of the Wichita *Eagle,* where the papers were printed and then rushed back by plane to Hutchinson for distribution in that city.

Many of the incidents pictured in the chapter

about the New Hampshire flood are actual occurrences.

Incredible though it may seem, even the affair with the bootlegger, in which Jimmy Donnelly is forced to fly a rum runner to Canada, actually happened. Shirley Short, former Air Mail pilot and flier for the Chicago *Daily News,* told me the story. Hamilton Lee, piloting a plane for the Chicago *Tribune,* transported food to folks marooned on an island in Lake Michigan. A bootlegger, flying over the island at the same time, broke a connecting rod bearing and got down safely, although his engine was torn half out of his plane. He clapped a pistol to Lee's head and forced Lee to carry him the rest of the way to the mainland. For the purpose of this story it was necessary to transfer the incident to Lake Ontario, but that does not alter the essential truthfulness of the tale.

The fact is that almost everything in this book is based upon an actual occurrence, or was suggested to me by fliers as the result of their experiences. I mention this fact because, although this book is purely a piece of fiction, the purpose of

the book is to show the part that fliers play in news coverage. Hence it had to be truthful in essence.

For material and other assistance, the writer is indebted to many persons connected with the business of flying. In particular I wish to express my indebtedness to Pilot Warren J. White, of Albany, who "flew" the New York *Times* from Albany to Lake Placid. Mr. White has had years of experience as pilot and manager of flying enterprises. He supplied much material, suggested many situations and incidents for this book, and finally checked the manuscript for inaccuracies and "touched up" the flying technique to give that part of the story a truly professional air. To Mr. C. G. Andrus, chief of the Eastern Division of the Airways Weather Bureau, I have long been indebted for information concerning the work of the forecasters in aiding pilots. To these men and to many others who have assisted me in the work of collecting material for flying stories, I wish to express my hearty thanks.

News fliers do the most remarkable things and have the most wonderful adventures. But like

most other things connected with the business of collecting news, these adventures are seldom heard of excepting in newspaper or flying circles. If this story makes these achievements more evident to readers, the writer will be gratified.

LEWIS EDWIN THEISS.

Lewisburg, Penna.

CONTENTS

I.	Jimmy Donnelly Scents a Story in a Scorched Piece of Parachute	15
II.	A Flight in Quest of News	26
III.	Jimmy Meets an Old Friend	38
IV.	Jimmy Makes Good	53
V.	The Long Flight to a Fire	62
VI.	Flying Blind Over the Graveyard of Airplanes	85
VII.	A Forced Landing in a Fog	110
VIII.	Jimmy Saves a Boyhood Friend	128
IX.	Covering a Great Flood by Airplane	151
X.	Jimmy Visits a Lightship Off the Coast	180
XI.	Jimmy Is Tricked by His Rival	189
XII.	Jimmy Lands a Job for Johnnie	208
XIII.	Jimmy Has an Adventure With a Bootlegger	228
XIV.	Taking Help to Marooned Islanders	242
XV.	Jimmy Joins the Caterpillar Club	254
XVI.	The Bootlegger Repays Jimmy's Kindness	280
XVII.	Jimmy Triumphs Over Rand	301

The Flying Reporter

CHAPTER I

Jimmy Donnelly Scents a Story in a Scorched Piece of Parachute

JIMMY DONNELLY had just arrived at the hangar at the Long Island flying field where his plane was housed. To be sure, the plane really wasn't Jimmy's, because it belonged to the New York *Morning Press;* but Jimmy was its pilot, and had flown it ever since that great newspaper had decided that it must have a plane of its own. And Jimmy had piloted it so long, and had taken such loving care of it, that he felt as though it were his very own. Indeed, he could not have lavished more attention on the plane if it *had* been his own. He was forever polishing and cleaning it, and checking over the engine, and keeping it tuned up to concert pitch.

But just now Jimmy was not thinking about his plane. The morning mail lay before him on the table in the little hangar office. There were the daily papers, some circulars, and several letters. Jimmy had already slit the letters open. The one he picked out of the bunch was a rather bulky letter that bore, in the upper left hand corner, this return address: Warren Long, Hadley Airport, New Brunswick, N. J. But Jimmy did not need to read this return address to know from whom the letter came. He recognized the handwriting instantly. That was why he selected this letter in preference to any other letter, to read first.

He knew perfectly well that it was from his old friend Warren Long, dean of Air Mail fliers, the pilot who had helped him to get into the U. S. Air Mail Service as a " grease monkey," and who had afterward assisted him up the ladder, rung by rung, until he, Jimmy, had attained his present enviable position as a flying reporter for the New York *Morning Press.*

Jimmy wondered why Warren Long had written to him. He opened the envelope eagerly.

Out dropped what looked like a white silk handkerchief. Jimmy was more puzzled than ever. With growing curiosity he pulled the letter from the envelope, spread it out on his desk, and read as follows:

DEAR JIMMY:

Last night I had occasion to join the Caterpillar Club. It is odd how a fellow's brain works at such times. As I was on my way to the ground I thought of you. Why I should think of you at such a time I do not know. But I did, and I said to myself, "Jimmy would like a piece of this parachute. He's always collecting souvenirs." So when I got my feet on solid ground once more, I cut a piece of silk out of the 'chute, which was already badly torn by the bushes, and here it is. You may like to add it to your museum.

I suppose you'll read in the daily paper about my losing the mail. I'm all cut up about it. This is the first cargo I ever lost in ten years of flying the mail. I tried to save it, but it was impossible. You see, my plane somehow caught fire. I tried to extinguish the flames; but the fire must have been in the crank-case or somewhere where the extinguisher fluid couldn't touch it. Then I tried to reach the nearest emergency landing field; but

my engine went dead. The flames were spreading fast and shooting back into the cockpit in sheets. There was nothing to do but step out. My, how I hated to abandon the mail. But I had no choice. So I disconnected my head phones from the instrument board, picked up my flash-light, and stepped out.

The instant I did so the plane turned on her side and dived straight after me. It was interesting to watch it. I was evidently falling head down, for I could see everything without even turning my eyes. My ship plunged like a rocket stick. She was just one long streak of fire. I thought sure she was going to hit me. I tried to crowd over and get out of the way. You can't imagine what a funny, helpless feeling a fellow has when he can't touch anything with either his hands or his feet. Anyway, the ship just grazed me, but a miss is as good as a mile. The instant she was past I started to pull the rip-cord. I found my flash-light was in my right hand. I had to shift it to my left hand. That didn't take very long, but I was then so near the ground that every second counted. I made the shift and gave the rip-cord a quick jerk. It wasn't a moment too soon, either. While I was floating down the rest of the way to the earth I thought of you.

While I was still in the air, my ship hit with a terrific explosion. It was utterly consumed.

Everything about it was burned. Much of the metal was melted by the terrible heat. The place where I came down was nearly half a mile from the spot where the ship landed. There was a thick woods between me and the ship. I could see the glare of the fire plainly, and I hurried right over to the spot. A lad from the neighborhood helped me. Some farmers were already there.

I am sending this bit of my 'chute for you to add to your collection, as I said, and I also write to tell you that if you ever have to step out of your ship at night, be sure to take your flash-light. I found mine more than useful. For I landed in a scrub patch on a hillside. It was rough country and I was far from being at my best. But with the aid of my flash-light and the help of the lad I mentioned I had no trouble in getting to my plane, and later in reaching a town.

I hope everything is going well with you. The best of luck to you.

Ever your friend,
WARREN LONG.

Jimmie stared at the letter incredulously. For a moment he was silent. Then, "Thank God Warren wasn't hurt!" he cried. "I wonder where it happened. And I wonder where War-

ren is now. And how in time did he get that letter to me so quickly?"

For a time Jimmy was silent, thinking the matter over. Presently he thought he had solved the problem. "Warren left Hadley with the 9:35 P. M. section of the mail," he muttered. "The fire probably occurred before he had been flying more than an hour or so. He was likely near some town where he could catch a late train, and he probably got back to Hadley early this morning. He must have written this note at once and got it into a mail for New York. It was mighty quick work, no matter how he did it. And it was just like Warren Long. He wanted to tell me about the flash-light and was afraid he would never think to mention it when he saw me. Gee! I am sure glad to have this piece of his 'chute. You bet I'll put it in my 'museum,' as he calls my little collection of aviation keepsakes. Who wouldn't be glad to have a piece of Warren Long's parachute?"

Jimmy picked up the little square of silk and smoothed it lovingly. The fabric was creamy white, beautifully woven, with a lovely sheen. It

was thin and delicate and almost gauzy in effect, and one could hardly believe that so delicate a fabric could possibly have withstood the terrific strain imposed upon it when it suddenly opened by Warren Long's two hundred pounds—for with his heavy flying suit and the 'chute pack itself, the pilot must easily have weighed as much as that.

In one corner of the square of silk was a dark, scorched space.

"Gee!" said Jimmy. "That fire was a lot nearer getting Warren Long than he intimated. But that is like him. He would hardly have mentioned it if he had had a leg burned off. If his parachute got scorched like that, he certainly had a close call himself. I know that, all right."

Jimmy spread the square of silk on his desk and smoothed it out with his hand. It had evidently been roughly and hastily cut from the parachute. The edges were jagged and uneven. "I'll get some woman to trim these edges and overcast them," thought Jimmy. "Then the silk can't unravel. And if I ever *should* want to use it as a handkerchief, I could."

A sudden thought came to him. Hastily he folded and thrust the bit of silk into the envelope. Then he reached for the *Morning Press*.

"I wonder what the paper says about the affair," he muttered.

The item he was searching for Jimmy found on the front page, near the bottom of column six. It was a brief story, hardly three inches long, telling how Long's plane had caught fire and how the pilot had jumped from the burning ship, after finding that he could not extinguish the blaze. Jimmy read the story and frowned.

"Some country correspondent who doesn't know a good story when he sees one sent that in," growled Jimmy, indignantly. "Why, it's evident from Warren's letter that he had a most startling experience, with that flaming ship diving straight at him, while he was utterly powerless to help himself. That's great human interest stuff. It ought to be good for half a column any day. And if we had the details, I'll bet there'd be a front page spread in it."

With Jimmy, to think was to act. He reached for the telephone.

"Please give me the *Morning Press,*" he told the telephone operator.

A moment later he was talking to the city editor of that paper.

"Mr. Davis," he said, "I have just been reading the story about Warren Long's parachute jump last night. I have had a note from Warren Long, too. It seems that when he stepped out of the burning plane he fell head first, and in that position he watched the plane as he dropped. The ship turned over almost as soon as he stepped out of her and dived straight at him, like a flaming arrow. Warren didn't dare open his 'chute for fear the plane would foul it and he would be killed. So he just kept on falling head first, watching the blazing plane as it tore after him, and hoping the thing would pass him clean and in time. For he wasn't very high up when he jumped. The ship barely missed him as it shot by. The instant it was past, Warren yanked his rip-cord, and it wasn't a moment too soon, either. The 'chute opened and kept him up in the air for a few seconds, while the ship hit the ground with a tremendous explosion. The fire that fol-

lowed was terrific. Fortunately, the wind blew Warren well to one side. But he must have been burned some before he jumped, for he sent me a bit of his parachute, and the silk is badly scorched."

"Do you know where Warren Long is now?" asked the city editor.

"No, sir. But I suspect he came back to Hadley Airport on a train, and is probably at his home in Plainfield."

"The story we printed is an A. P. despatch," said Mr. Davis. "All the papers will have it. Likely that is all the story any of them will carry. We ought to be able to get a good exclusive follow-up story. I'll send a man over to Hadley to get into touch with Long and get all the details from him. Meantime, I wish you would fly over to Ringtown, where the crash occurred, get all the facts you can there, and take pictures of the burned plane, the spot where the plane crashed, and anything else that will help the story."

"All right, Mr. Davis. I'll be off as soon as I can get my plane warmed up. Be sure to tell

the man you send to see Warren Long that I want Warren to give him the whole story. Otherwise he won't talk. But he'll do anything for me. Good-bye. I'm off."

CHAPTER II

A Flight in Quest of News

FAIRLY atremble with eagerness, Jimmy ran out into the hangar and made a rapid inspection of his plane, to see that everything was right. He glanced at the wheels, to see that the chocks were in front of them, then scrambled into the cabin and touched the starter. His engine answered with a roar. Jimmy throttled it down until it was idling gently. For a moment he sat listening to it. Then, satisfied, he climbed out of the ship, and set about completing his preparations for the task ahead of him.

Had Jimmy been a little more experienced in newspaper work he would not have been so excited about this simple assignment that Mr. Davis had given him. All he had to do was to fly a hundred miles or so, gather a few facts, take a few pictures, and get back as quickly as possible. But

there was no need to hurry, as there would have been had it been late in the day. Nevertheless, Jimmy was all atingle with enthusiasm and eagerness. He could hardly wait to be at his task.

Jimmy had always been like that about anything in which he was interested. He put his whole soul into whatever he was doing. Doubtless he owed his present job to that very fact. For after he had lost his place as a reserve mail pilot, when Uncle Sam quit flying the mails, Jimmy had really created this present job for himself. He had told Mr. Tom Johnson, the managing editor of the *Morning Press,* that that newspaper ought to have its own plane and its own pilot. And when Mr. Johnson said that that was the last thing the *Morning Press* needed, Jimmy had decided to prove to Mr. Johnson that the newspaper really *did* need a plane and a pilot even though the managing editor thought otherwise. Jimmy proved his point by volunteering to execute two difficult commissions for the *Morning Press* and then by succeeding in each commission. And in each case he owed his success to his enthusiasm, his whole-hearted devotion to

his task, and his refusal to be defeated. In each case perseverance had won for him.

First, he had volunteered to find Warren Long, when that veteran pilot was lost in "the graveyard of airplanes," as the mail pilots call that vast and terrible mountain wilderness in western Pennsylvania. And he had found him, after all other searchers had been baffled. He had found him disabled by a broken leg, in the path of an advancing forest fire, after a terrible forced landing. The story of that adventure is told in "The Search for the Lost Mail Plane." Thus, for the second time, Jimmy had saved the life of this brother pilot that he loved so well. The first time was when Warren Long's plane fell into the Susquehanna River immediately in front of Jimmy's home, and Jimmy had swum out in the icy water and rescued the unconscious pilot. The account of that rescue is given in "Piloting the U. S. Air Mail." That occurrence marked the beginning of the devoted friendship between this older pilot and the youthful Jimmy. So it is easy to see why Warren Long sent a bit of his parachute to Jimmy, who was interested in collecting

such things, and why Jimmy told his city editor that Warren Long would do anything for him.

The second commission that Jimmy had executed for the *Morning Press* was the running down of a gang of robbers after one of them had looted a mail plane that had crashed one stormy night in this selfsame " graveyard of airplanes." The story of that thief chase is told in " Trailing the Air Mail Bandit." It was a long, hard chase, too; and one which Jimmy would never have won had it not been for these very same qualities of enthusiasm, determination, and perseverance. For in this case Jimmy had had to work against the greatest obstacles and the most incredible discouragements.

In both cases he won; and his success did far more than merely clear up two mysteries. It convinced Mr. Johnson that Jimmy was right when he argued that the *Morning Press* ought to add a flier to its staff. Mr. Johnson added one; and quite naturally he chose Jimmy. Thus it was that Jimmy's job, like his plane, was brand-new.

Although Jimmy had handled these two big

stories successfully, though of course he had considerable help, he didn't feel any too sure of himself yet as a reporter. For during the short time that he had been a regular member of the *Morning Press* staff, there had been few stories on which Jimmy could work. Mostly he had been doing tasks of the fetch-and-carry sort. He had transported pictures and camera men and reporters. But he had had little opportunity for independent news gathering. Hence he welcomed this present chance with such eagerness.

But even though Jimmy was not yet a seasoned reporter, there was one quality he possessed that made up for much that he still lacked. He had a naturally keen news sense. He was gifted with what newspaper men call a " nose for news." He felt the dramatic possibilities in everything he heard and saw. He seemed to sense the facts that should be secured in order to make the most of a story. That was why he at once saw that the tale in the morning paper about Warren Long was faulty, that the correspondent had failed to secure the dramatic elements in the story that would appeal most to people. That was why

Jimmy knew there was a real human interest story in this thrilling leap from a burning plane. It was this keen news sense that now made Jimmy so eager to get the facts—the significant facts—that the correspondent had failed to secure. Jimmy wanted to make good. He wanted to help his paper "scoop" all the other newspapers in New York. He believed he could do it. That was why he was all atremble with eagerness. Like a race-horse at the barrier, he was restive and impatient to go.

But though Jimmy was green in the newspaper game, he was well seasoned in the flying business. He had had too much experience to take anything for granted. Hence, while his plane was warming up, Jimmy made sure that he was prepared for any emergency. He saw to it that his flash-light was in its place and in good working order. That was the first thing he thought of. In future it would always be the first thing he thought of. Warren Long's letter had made an indelible impression on his mind. He saw that the plane contained a little case of emergency rations that he habitually carried. He

made sure his pistol was in place. That was a piece of equipment most fliers lacked. Mail pilots are compelled to carry pistols, and Jimmy had formed the habit of flying armed, while he was in the mail service. Experience had shown him the wisdom of having a firearm at hand in his ship. He made sure that he had his topographic maps and other articles that he had found to be necessary or desirable. Of course he put his camera aboard, with a plentiful supply of films.

After a final close inspection of the plane, Jimmy put on his 'chute and snapped it fast. Then he climbed into the cabin, glanced at the instruments, held the stick back, and shoved the throttle forward. No longer was there the staccato of exploding gases, but instead a thundering roar. Jimmy kept her wide open while he noted the maximum number of revolutions his propeller was making, his oil temperature and oil pressure. Then he switched from one "mag" to the other, but noticed no difference in "revs." Gradually Jimmy throttled her down to a murmur. She was perfect!

An attendant came forward and pointed to the

chocks. Jimmy nodded "O. K." As the attendant pulled the chocks from the wheels, Jimmy glanced at the wind-sock on his hangar. Then he taxied slowly down the field. He headed into the wind and gave her full gun. The ship accelerated rapidly. With a thundering roar the ship took off gracefully, guided by an experienced hand and brain. Jimmy was off on his assignment.

He cut over to the very edge of Long Island and followed the southern shore-line. Over the Bay and across the southern end of Staten Island he winged his way, heading south of west, to pick up the route of the Air Mail. Long before he crossed the Delaware, near Easton, he was right on the line. How much like old times it seemed, to be flying over the beacon lights. To be sure, they were not flashing now, in the morning light, but he knew where the towers were and he saw each one as he flew over it, where it stood like a friendly sentinel, to point out the path.

In the clear light of day Jimmy had no need of guide-posts or flashing lights or radio signals. He knew the route as well as a schoolboy knows the way to the high school. But Jimmy's plane

was equipped with radio, and ear phones were built into his flying helmet. Presently he "plugged in" to his instrument board to see if he could pick up the weather. That is a topic of constant interest to every flier. He had barely passed Numidia before he heard the Bellefonte radio man sending out his hourly weather report.

"This is station WWQ, Airways Communication Station, Bellefonte, Pa., broadcasting weather information on the Chicago-New York airway. It is now 10 A. M. Eastern Standard Time. At Hadley Field, N. J., scattered clouds, ceiling unlimited, visibility eight miles, wind south, nine miles, temperature 50, dewpoint 29, barometer 29.98; Allentown, Pa., scattered clouds, ceiling unlimited, visibility seven miles, wind southeast, four miles, temperature 51, barometer 29.94. Park Place, Pa., broken clouds, ceiling estimated four thousand, visibility ten miles, wind southeast, fourteen miles, temperature 45, barometer 29.89; Sunbury, Pa., overcast light haze, ceiling estimated twenty-five hundred, visibility four miles, wind calm, temperature 50, barometer 29.81; Numidia, Pa., overcast light

haze, occasional sprinkles of rain, ceiling twenty-four hundred, visibility three miles, wind southwest, five miles, temperature 49, barometer 29.79. This concludes the broadcast of weather information from station WWQ, Bellefonte, Pa."

"That sounds good to me," thought Jimmy. "I ought to get over to Ringtown and back to Long Island without having to face any bad weather. I'm certainly glad of it, for I'll have enough trouble as it is."

He flew on, his head phones still plugged in. Sounding endlessly he could hear the steady stroke of the Air Mail radio beacon sending a string of dashes—"dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah," which tells the pilot when he is exactly on the line. Jimmy had small need of any such help this morning, for the air was so clear that he could see for miles in every direction. But he thought of the invaluable help this radio beacon must be to the mail pilots in the fog. The device had been perfected since Jimmy was a mail pilot. He had never carried mail under its guidance. But he was as well equipped to profit by it as any mail pilot was. More than once he had been helped in

bad weather by this very same signal, as he flew along the mail route.

In a sense he was helped now. A little breeze had been coming up, that blew across the line of flight. Jimmy was being blown to one side, without realizing it. Of course he would presently have noticed that fact anyway, and brought his ship back to the line, but the signal in his ears gave him prompt warning. No longer did he hear the steady beat: " dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah." Instead, the head phones were saying: " dot dah, dot dah, dot dah, dot dah, dot dah." The radio signal had changed to dot dash, dot dash. That told Jimmy that he was to the left of the line. He knew that if he had chanced to be on the right side of the line instead, the signals would have changed to dash dot, dash dot, and his head phones would have said: " dah dot, dah dot, dah dot, dah dot." He nosed his ship a little into the wind, and presently he was right over the line once more, and the head phones again were singing: " dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah."

" Gee," thought Jimmy, " if only they had had the radio beacon from the start, how very many

tragedies the Air Mail would have been saved. It's fine for the men who are carrying the mail now. They always know when they are on the line, even if it is so foggy they can't see a thing. If it just weren't for these old Pennsylvania mountains, flying the eastern leg of the Air Mail would be pie. But I guess this leg will always be a graveyard. Hello, here's Ringtown. I've got to be thinking about getting down."

CHAPTER III

Jimmy Meets an Old Friend—Johnnie Lee, of the Wireless Patrol

FOR many miles—ever since he crossed the Delaware into Pennsylvania, in fact, Jimmy had been flying over a region so rough and rugged that it strikes terror to the heart of the aviator. For here Nature has plowed up the land in rugged furrows that rise thousands of feet. In places the earth is jumbled in confused masses. Rocks, trees, precipices, bogs, and deep ravines characterize the whole countryside. Rare, indeed, is the level spot that is large enough, or smooth enough, or firm enough to permit a safe landing. And well Jimmy knew what awaited him or any other aviator who was luckless enough to be forced down in this terrible region. And yet this country was tame beside that of the "graveyard of airplanes" in the western half of the state.

It was here, when he was fairly in the heart of these terrible mountains, that Warren Long had found his plane afire. As Jimmy looked down now at the torn and jagged face of the country, he fairly shivered when he thought of the terrible situation in which his friend had been placed such a short time previously. For it was obviously impossible to land a plane safely in these ragged hills, especially in the dark; and to Jimmy it seemed almost as dangerous to trust to a parachute. For there was no way by which the falling flier could tell when he was about to land with a crash on a rock, or a jagged stump, or in the splintering arms of a pine-tree—no way, it came to Jimmy as an afterthought, unless he carried a flash-light powerful enough to pierce the blackness of the night. And Jimmy felt again that same feeling of gratitude to Uncle Sam that he had felt many a time previously for the little emergency landing fields along the lighted airway that the Government has spied out and marked off with encircling lights at night, where aviators in distress can land in safety.

It was one of these emergency fields—that at

Ringtown—which Warren Long had been striving to reach on the preceding night. And it was this same field that Jimmy was now heading for.

Jimmy had been flying rather high. Gently pulling back the throttle, he went into a steep spiral. At about eight hundred feet he straightened up while he glanced at the wind-sock. "Bang" went the gun again, and Jimmy flew around the edge of the field into the wind. The field was none too large. Tall trees on the lee side of it called for plenty of energetic side-slipping and fish-tailing. Jimmy straightened her out, held her off to lose flying speed, and as soon as he felt the wheels touch hauled back on the stick and stepped on his brakes. Jimmy breathed a sigh of relief and thanked his lucky stars for those brakes, for the ship came to rest within twenty-five feet of a stone fence. In another moment he was taxiing safely across the field toward the beacon light tower, where a knot of men and boys had gathered, waiting for Jimmy's ship to come to rest.

Jimmy throttled down his engine to let it idle for a few minutes so the valves could cool before

he "cut his switch." He stepped to the ground. The little company of spectators surged toward him.

"Can any one of you tell me——" began Jimmy. Then he stopped short and gazed at one of the group in silent astonishment. "Well, where in the world did you come from, Johnnie Lee?" he demanded, after a moment. And he stepped quickly toward a sturdy lad who stood somewhat behind the other spectators. "I haven't seen you for ages—not since I left home to learn to fly, in fact."

"Jimmy!" cried the lad, rushing forward with outstretched hand. "I didn't know you at first, with your helmet on. I'm awfully glad to see you." And he fairly wrung Jimmy's hand.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Jimmy, when they had finished shaking hands.

"I might ask you the same question," laughed Johnnie. "I am here because I can't very well help it. My father's health broke down, and the doctor said he would have to get into the country. We have relatives close by named Healy. So Dad bought a little farm here. I've been at home,

doing most of the farming. You are the first member of the old Wireless Patrol I have seen since we moved down here. My! It's been tough to be separated from all the gang. I think of the old days often, and of the fine times we used to have when we were in camp at Fort Brady."

"They were good old days, weren't they, Johnnie?" said Jimmy. "How the old crowd has gotten separated. There's Alec Cunningham down in New Jersey in the oyster business, and Roy Mercer a wireless operator on an ocean steamer, and Bob Martin in the Lighthouse Service, and Henry Harper in the Coast Guard. My, it doesn't seem possible that the old crowd could be scattered so. Can you tell me about any of the other fellows of the Wireless Patrol?"

"I can tell you a whole lot about Jimmy Donnelly," laughed Johnnie.

"How's that?" demanded Jimmy. "What do you know about me and how did you find it out?"

"You don't think anybody could have all the adventures you have had, finding lost air mail pilots and rounding up robbers and not have

people know about it, do you? Why, I read about those things in the newspaper."

"That reminds me," said Jimmy, "that I am here now for the *Morning Press,* to get more details about Warren Long's parachute jump last night. You can't tell me anything about it, can you?"

"I certainly can," said Johnnie, "for I saw the whole thing happen, and the pilot landed right on our farm and I helped him get back to his burning ship to try to save some of the mail."

"Well, if that isn't luck," said Jimmy. "Take me to the burned plane, will you, and tell me what you know about the affair."

"All right. Come along," and Johnnie led the way toward a clearing on the slope of a hill at some little distance.

The way was rough, for they had to pass over some stony fields and through a patch of timber. They had ample time to talk as they walked.

"How did you happen to see Warren Long's burning plane?" asked Jimmy.

"I was looking for it."

"Looking for it! What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. I was looking for it, though I had no idea it was going to be afire. You see, ever since you got into the Air Mail, Jimmy, I have been interested in the mail planes. I have always hoped that one of them would land here. And as long as you were a mail pilot I guess I was always hoping that you would be piloting the ship that stopped here. Well, I got so much interested in the mail planes that I kept right on watching for them, even after you left the service. You know the first night mail plane always comes over here just about bedtime, and I almost always step out-of-doors and watch it sail over."

"I know how you feel," said Jimmy.

"Well," continued Johnnie, "when I heard the mail plane coming last night I stepped outside as usual, and there was the plane. But something was wrong. It was afire. You could see the flames plainly. It flew in a crazy fashion ——"

"That must have been while Warren Long was fighting the flames," interrupted Jimmy.

"And it went sailing by pretty fast. For a time the fire seemed to die down, and I thought

the pilot had it about out. Then it burst out worse than ever. By this time the plane was a long way past here. But it turned and headed back. I knew right away that the pilot was trying to reach the field where you just landed. I called to Dad that a plane was on fire and was heading for the landing field, and that maybe we could help save the ship if we got to the field in time. So we set out together for the field."

"Do you live far from it?" inquired Jimmy.

"About half a mile, I suppose, though our land runs clear down to the landing field. Anyway, before we were half-way to the field we saw that the pilot would never make it. The whole airplane seemed to be aflame. It was fairly spouting fire from all sides. I knew the pilot would have to jump, and I couldn't understand why he stayed with the ship half as long as he did."

"You would if you knew Warren Long," interrupted Jimmy. "That was just like him. He risked his life to try to save the mail."

"He risked it, all right," said Johnnie. "His plane was just a mass of flames. I don't see why he wasn't burned to death right in the cockpit. I

just stood still and held my breath while I waited for him to jump."

"Did you see him when he did jump?"

"See him? Why, you could see everything. The whole sky was as light as day. Out he came in a tremendous dive right through a sheet of flame. I never breathed while I waited for him to open his parachute. Do you know what happened? It was awful."

"What was awful?" demanded Jimmy.

"Why, that burning ship turned over on its side the instant the pilot left it and dived straight after him. I thought sure the plane was going to crash into him. It was frightful to watch. My heart simply stopped beating while that plane roared after him. And the pilot was as cool as an icicle. He just kept on falling and falling and never moved a muscle. As the plane shot by him I thought it had struck him, and I cried right out. But somehow the plane missed him and shot down like a flaming meteor. Gee! You should have seen what happened then. Your friend had his parachute open the instant the blazing ship had passed him."

"How high was he?"

"Not very high. Just a few hundred feet. But the wind caught his parachute instantly and snapped it open with a jerk. I could see the pilot spin around like a weather-vane in a wind squall. You know he was falling head foremost all this time, and the parachute jerked him upright quicker than you could wink your eye. It must have given him an awful jolt."

"What happened then?" demanded Jimmy.

"Why, Dad and I separated. He ran toward the plane, to try to save the mail, but I never gave a thought to the mail. I ran to help the pilot. I couldn't help thinking that after all it might be you, Jimmy. You know a fellow can never be sure just who's in a plane."

"That was mighty kind of you, Johnnie. But I wasn't in the plane, and that lets me out of the story. What did you do when you reached the pilot?"

"I got to him soon after he hit the ground. He was all tangled up in his parachute, for he had come down in some scrub growth and the cords were twisted among the stems, and the

parachute itself was fast in some bushes. He had landed pretty hard, too, and was half stunned. And he wrenched one of his ankles badly. Maybe it's sprained. Anyway, I helped him to get out of his harness, and I told him just to sit down and take it easy while I gathered up the parachute. But he didn't want to wait an instant. He said he had to get to the ship to try to save the mail. So he just snatched out his knife and cut a big piece out of the parachute, and then we hurried over to the burning ship as fast as he could walk. He never said a word, but I know his ankle must have hurt him terribly."

"Did you save any of the mail?"

"No. When we got there the fire was so hot you couldn't get anywhere near the ship. Dad and some other men had tried to pull some mail-sacks out of the plane, but it just wasn't possible. The fire was too hot. I wasn't much interested in the mail or even in the plane. I couldn't think of anything but the pilot. He looked awful. When we got near the burning ship, where it was light enough to see him well, I noticed at once that his eyebrows and lashes were burned off, his

face was badly scorched and his hands were burned almost raw. It's a wonder he wasn't burned to a crisp."

"His flying suit and his helmet and goggles saved him," said Jimmy. "What I can't understand is why he didn't jump sooner. He must have known well enough that the ship was doomed."

"He did. I asked him why he stayed in it so long, and he told me that he couldn't leave the ship any sooner because it might have fallen on some of the homes beneath him. You see he was right over the town. So he just kept right on flying, with the flames all about him, until he was sure he was clear of the town. What do you think of that?"

"I am not surprised. In fact, I should be surprised if he had done anything else. It's exactly the sort of thing Warren Long would do."

"It was the bravest thing I ever heard of," said Johnnie.

"Could you do anything for him?" demanded Jimmy. "His burns must have been very painful."

"Sure we did. I took him home with me and mother put some grease on his face and bandaged his hands. But he didn't seem to think about anything except the mail. That evidently worried him. The pilot soon caught a train going east, and that is the last I saw of him."

"Well, you certainly have given me a vivid account of the affair, Johnnie. You'd make a good reporter."

"Gee! I'd like to be one. It's pretty dull out here in these mountains. Dad's got his health back now and doesn't really need me any longer. I've been looking for a job in town. If you know of any opening I wish you'd tell me about it, Jimmy."

"I'll do all I can to help you, Johnnie, though I don't believe I can do much for you. You see, you have never had any experience as a reporter."

By this time they had reached the burned airship. Several persons were gathered about it, for ever since daybreak people had been coming from far and near to take a look at it. Jimmy stood for some time viewing the sad wreck.

"Thank God Warren escaped," he muttered.

Then he slowly walked around the burned plane, trying to find the best point of view from which to get a picture. He took several snaps, from different angles, and then asked Johnnie to guide him to a spot where he could get the best picture of the region. Johnnie took him to a little knoll that rose sharply at no great distance, and from this vantage-point Jimmy secured an excellent picture of the countryside, with the wrecked plane in the very centre of the picture. Then he and Johnnie walked across the country to the spot where Warren Long had landed. The parachute was no longer there, as the remains of it had been gathered up by the crew sent from the Air Mail field to salvage what could be saved from the wreck. But Jimmy was able to see exactly where Warren Long had struck the ground, and to get some good snaps of the place.

"I ought to see your father," said Jimmy, "and find out exactly what occurred in the effort to save the mail. Besides, I want to see him anyway. I haven't seen him since—I don't know when. And I want to see your mother, too."

"We'll go over to the house," replied Johnnie.

"Mother will be there, and Dad is at work somewhere about the place."

They hurried over to the farmhouse, and found both of Johnnie's parents right at hand. It was a pleasant meeting, for Jimmy had known the Lees all his life. He had little time for visiting, however. Most of the little visit he spent in asking Mr. Lee questions about the burning plane and the effort to save the mail. When he had all the details he could gather, he said good-bye to Johnnie's parents. Then the two lads walked back to the landing field.

Jimmy started his engine and let it run a few minutes to get warm. When he was ready to depart, he held out his hand to Johnnie. "I am ever so glad I found you," he said, "and I am more than grateful to you for what you folks did for Warren Long last night. You have helped me a lot, Johnnie. I won't forget about you when I get back to New York. If there is anything I can do for you, I will certainly do it. Now I must be off. They want these pictures at the office just as soon as they can get them. Good-bye." And Jimmy was off.

CHAPTER IV

Jimmy Makes Good

HIS mind white-hot with the fire of interest, his very soul atremble with eagerness to get the gripping story on paper, Jimmy drove his plane through the air like an eagle cleaving the sky. A stiff west wind that had sprung up hurled him onward. And Jimmy climbed high to get every ounce of help possible, for at the higher altitudes the wind was almost a gale. So he reached his hangar in an amazingly short time. He ran his ship under cover and saw that the gasoline supply was replenished immediately, to prevent the condensation of moisture in the fuel tanks as the ship cooled. Eager though he was to write, Jimmy was taking no chances of getting water in his gasoline. His oil supply was also replenished. These things attended to, Jimmy

turned immediately to the business of getting his story ready for print.

A taxi took him speedily to the *Morning Press* office in Manhattan. There he told his city editor what he had learned. And he told it so eagerly and so convincingly that that usually bored individual sat up and listened with interest.

"If you can put that on paper as well as you tell it," said the city editor, "you may write three-quarters of a column. We'll run two or three pictures with it, if they are any good, and play the story up for all it's worth."

"What did you learn from Hadley?" asked Jimmy. "Have you heard from the man you sent down there?"

"He couldn't get a thing at first-hand. Your friend the pilot is in bed, under the doctor's orders, and could not see our reporter. All the latter could get was what he picked up from men about the airport. There wasn't anything you don't have and nothing half so good. So there will be no facts for you from that source. Write what you have, as plainly and simply as you told it to me just now. I'll send you prints of your

photographs as soon as they are done. We ought to have proofs very shortly."

Jimmy had not expected to write the entire story. Indeed, he had not been certain that he would have a chance to write any of it. The man who had been sent to see Warren Long was an experienced and able reporter, and Jimmy rather expected that this reporter would do the writing, and that all Jimmy could do would be to tell his story to his fellow reporter. But the matter had turned out just the opposite. Jimmy himself was to write the story.

He realized that once more a big chance had come to him. For weeks—ever since he had won his new job, in fact—he had been doing little assignments, hoping every day that something worth while would come his way; and now this thing had happened. He meant to make the most of it.

Altogether without realizing it, Jimmy had prepared himself to do a good piece of work. He did not understand that the surest way to write a really great story is to be so full of a subject and to feel the story so intensely that one is just

bursting with it. Yet that was exactly the situation Jimmy was in. His love for Warren Long, his admiration for that heroic pilot, and his desire to tell all the world what a truly remarkable thing his friend had done—all this, coupled with Jimmy's keen sense of the dramatic, had prepared him to write a gripping story. It was the same thing that had happened when he wrote the story of the Air Mail bandit. Jimmy was so full of the subject that he could think of nothing else.

Now he sat down at a typewriter in a corner, where he was not likely to be disturbed, and got ready to write. He had been turning the story over and over in his mind. He wanted to begin it in a way that would catch and hold the imagination of the reader. The feature of the story that appealed to his own imagination most powerfully was the picture of Warren Long sitting in his flaming cockpit and being slowly roasted while he guided his plane away from the little hamlet and out to the uninhabited districts, where it could not possibly fall on a house and burn up some humble home. To Jimmy's mind that pic-

ture was even more compelling than the one of Warren Long's falling headfirst to earth and calmly waiting for his blazing ship to pass him before he opened his parachute. In almost any other case, this latter picture would have been an unparalleled feature. But to Jimmy, while it was extremely spectacular, it lacked the appeal of the other picture. And Jimmy was right. His news sense in this case was unerring. For Warren Long, risking death in his cockpit in order to save others, was a far more appealing figure than Warren Long doing something spectacularly cool and brave to save his own life.

Jimmy rightly judged that what appealed to him most powerfully would also probably appeal most powerfully to others. So he began his story with this feature of greatest appeal—the picture of Warren Long's sacrificing himself to save some humble country folk that he didn't even know. When he had written what he had to say about this, Jimmy took up the story of the pilot's drop to earth, and the breath-taking experience he had had as his flaming plane dived after him. Finally he told the story, simply but graphically,

of how Johnnie Lee had rushed over the rough mountain in the dark to aid the fallen pilot, and how he had taken care of him from the moment he came upon him, entangled in his parachute in the scrub growth, up to the moment that the pilot stepped on the east-bound train.

So full of the story was Jimmy that he heard nothing, saw nothing, thought of nothing but the tale he was putting on paper. Before him he could see the scene he was picturing—see it as vividly as though he were still on the spot. And unconsciously he found himself using almost word for word the vivid description of the accident that Johnnie Lee had given him. His mind was so full of the story that, once he had begun to write, the tale came pouring from his typewriter as tumultuously and sparklingly as a mountain torrent rushes down its rocky bed. When at last he ended his story, he had done a truly fine piece of work. His tale was so fresh and vivid that it could not fail to attract attention. Jimmy, of course, did not realize that. All he knew was that he had done the very best he could. If there was any luck about the story, it was in the matter

of the photographs. They were as clear and sharp as Jimmy's word pictures. And they illuminated the text excellently.

When Jimmy had read the story over and made such corrections as appeared to him desirable, he took it to the city editor. Then, thinking the latter might wish to question him about some of the facts, he sat down and waited until his editor could read the story. Jimmy was right in his guess that Mr. Davis might want to ask about the story. But he was much surprised at the question Mr. Davis put to him.

The latter read the story and then glanced through it a second time. Then he looked at Jimmy. "Where did you get the idea of writing this story as you have written it?" he demanded.

Jimmy felt his heart sink. He was sure he had made a failure. But he answered cheerfully enough: "I wrote it that way, Mr. Davis, because I couldn't write it any other way. All I could see when I tried to write was Warren Long sitting in his burning cockpit and roasting while he piloted his ship to a point where it wouldn't do any damage when it came down."

"Just keep on seeing things that way," said the city editor. And without another word he picked up the story and the photographs and walked away.

Jimmy left the office somewhat puzzled and almost disconsolate. He felt sure his effort had been a failure. The city editor had not said one good word about it. And yet what did he mean by telling Jimmy to "keep on seeing things that way"? Jimmy was sorely puzzled. But if he could have seen where the city editor went and what he did with the story, Jimmy would have been amazed. For Mr. Davis went straight to the managing editor and laid the manuscript and the pictures on the latter's desk. All he said was this: "Here is a story young Donnelly just wrote. He flew over to Ringtown to get a follow-up on this morning's A. P. despatch about the parachute jump of a mail pilot there last night. I wish you'd read it."

But Jimmy had no way of knowing this, and even if he had had he would hardly have understood the significance of the thing. He could hardly have known what it meant for the city

editor thus to call the attention of the managing editor to a story before it got into type. But Jimmy would have been well enough pleased if he could have heard Mr. Johnson mutter to himself, after carefully reading the story, "Well, I guess we made no mistake in making a reporter out of Donnelly. I'll tell the city editor to try him out on something bigger than the assignments he has been getting."

So was illustrated the law that "To him that hath shall be given." Jimmy had demonstrated his ability. And as is always the case, a display of ability was soon followed by greater opportunity.

CHAPTER V

The Long Flight to a Fire

JIMMY'S next chance was not long in coming. A few days after he made his successful trip to Ringtown, Jimmy was called to the telephone in his hangar. Mr. Johnson was speaking.

"We have just had a 'flash' from Cleveland," he said, "to the effect that there has been a terrible disaster in a hospital there. The burning of X-ray films filled the hospital with deadly gases, and apparently scores of people have been killed. We are getting the A. P. service, but the story is so big we should like to have our own man on the spot. I am sending Frank Handley over to you. Be prepared to take off the moment he arrives. You are to coöperate with him in handling the story. Handley knows exactly what I want and will give you directions. We especially want good pictures. In all probability the wires

will be clogged with the volume of news matter filed. I am sending you to make sure that we get our story and the pictures. Get them back any way you can—by wire or by plane. But get them back. That is the important thing. Handley is already on his way and should reach you very soon."

"I'll be ready for him, Mr. Johnson," said Jimmy, "and I'll do my level best to carry out your orders. What is my deadline?"

"We want to be sure to catch the state edition. The presses start at midnight sharp. You ought to be here by eleven, and you *must* be here by eleven-thirty at the latest."

"I'll be there," said Jimmy, but little could he foresee what it was going to cost him to make good that promise.

He hung up the telephone receiver and skipped out into the hangar to start his engine to warming. Then he gathered up his camera, his portable typewriter, and all the other equipment he ordinarily carried in his plane. The cabin of his ship was especially fitted up with a desk, where he or any one else could write. In this desk he

stowed his typewriter and camera, so they would not be thrown about in the plane in case of rough going. In the floor of the ship there was a special opening for the taking of photographs vertically. The sides of the ship were lined with windows, to permit easy observation in all directions.

"We probably shall not have a minute to get anything to eat," thought Jimmy. "I'll put a lunch aboard and we can eat it as we fly."

He ran out to a near-by lunch wagon and had some sandwiches and milk prepared for him. By the time he got back with these, a taxi was just rolling up with Handley. Jimmy greeted his fellow reporter, whom he liked very much, and grabbed up the latter's little typewriter. Handley followed with a suitcase. They stowed the luggage in the plane, which was now ready to sail. Jimmy helped Handley buckle on a parachute. Then he strapped on his own. They stepped into the cabin and in another moment were climbing aloft as rapidly as Jimmy's engine would lift them.

Once more Jimmy flew south of west to connect with the Air Mail route to Cleveland. A

slight breeze was blowing at a higher altitude, so Jimmy went hedge-hopping along to avoid the wind as much as possible. The air seemed "dead" to him. It felt as though a storm might be brewing. So he plugged in with his head phones and listened for the hourly report of the Airways Weather Bureau. He hadn't long to wait. Soon he heard the wireless man at Hadley Field broadcasting. Jimmy listened intently. He learned that the weather was fair all the way to Cleveland. But the sky was overcast and the ceiling low. Visibility was poor. There was little wind. The prospect was for increasing cloudiness and bad weather.

"We ought to make Cleveland all right," thought Jimmy. "It isn't quite 400 miles from Hadley to Cleveland. There isn't any wind to speak of, so I won't have to stop at Bellefonte for gas. I ought to make the trip from Hadley in close to three hours."

Jimmy looked down and saw that he was already almost abreast of that airport. "In three hours," he muttered, "I'm *going* to be in Cleveland. This ship can do it, and I'll make her do

it." He opened his throttle a little wider, and the plane darted ahead faster than ever.

Away they soared, over the flat lands of New Jersey, above the hills of Pennsylvania, almost straight westward. As they drew near Ringtown Jimmy studied the country closely. He wondered if Johnnie were down there watching him.

"If he has a good pair of field-glasses," thought Jimmy, "he will easily be able to identify the plane. We are flying so low that he can see my license number plainly. And he ought to be able to read the name New York *Morning Press* painted on the sides of the ship. I guess I'll drop him a greeting."

Hastily he drew a little pad of paper from his pocket, and while he guided the ship with his left hand scribbled this message with his right on the pad, which he placed on his right leg.

"Hello, Johnnie. Going to Cleveland. Be back here about 9:30 to-night. Signal me as I go over. If you have a radio sending set, get in touch with me then. Jimmy Donnelly."

Snatching from his pocket his handkerchief and a piece of string, Jimmy passed them over to

Handley. "Tie strings to each corner of the handkerchief," he shouted into his ear, "and make a little parachute. I want to drop a message."

Handley had the parachute made in no time. Jimmy handed him the message for Johnnie. "Tie it fast and put a weight on it," he shouted. "Look in the desk."

Handley found some linotype slugs. He tied two or three to the little parachute. Jimmy motioned for him to toss the thing overboard. Handley slid a window open and dropped the message for Johnnie. They were almost directly over the little village. They could see a number of people on the ground watching them; for Jimmy was still flying as low as he dared to fly. The improvised parachute fluttered down, and several figures darted toward it. But long before Jimmy's message reached the earth, Jimmy himself was far beyond the town. It was impossible to see what had happened to his message, but Jimmie had no doubt it would get to Johnnie Lee promptly.

On they roared. Jimmy's ship was built for speed. He seldom drove it at its fastest, for that

was hard on the engine. But to-day he pushed it along much faster than his ordinary cruising speed. He fully intended to reach Cleveland within the specified time.

As they winged their way westward, Jimmy studied the sky intently. No ray of sunlight anywhere penetrated the dark cloud masses. The sky had a sullen, angry aspect. Though the air was quiet, Jimmy felt that perhaps this was the calm before the storm. He was quite sure that the good weather could not last until he was safely back on Long Island. So he listened closely to the weather broadcasts and tried to read the signs in the sky.

Jimmy made the Cleveland Airport by three o'clock. Before his ship glided to earth, he and Handley had consumed their little luncheon, and thus fortified were ready to plunge into the difficult task that lay ahead of them. They waited only long enough to order their plane serviced promptly, then they stepped into a taxi and were whirled toward the city.

At Handley's suggestion they drove directly to the office of the Police Commissioner, where

Handley presented his credentials and asked that he and Jimmy be given police passes. This took a little time, but Handley was too experienced a reporter to take any chances of delay later on. Their request was promptly granted. Thanking the Cleveland officials, the two New Yorkers hurried back to their taxi and were whirled off to the scene of the disaster. So great was the jam of trucks and fire apparatus and other vehicles that their taxi could not approach within several blocks of the hospital. Handley paid the driver.

"We shall need you all the afternoon," he said. "Stay right here and wait for us. We shall probably have to drive about considerably."

The driver agreed to wait for them, and Jimmy and his companion raced toward the hospital. Handley had his typewriter and Jimmy his camera. Newsies were crying the latest extras of the local papers. The New Yorkers bought copies of every paper offered for sale and hastily scanned them, marking names and addresses. Then they pushed on.

Though it was now more than four hours since the explosion occurred, there was still great

excitement and activity about the hospital. Policemen and firemen were still stationed about the place. The dead and injured had been removed and the fire extinguished. But the building still smoked, and the air was heavy with that peculiarly offensive odor that comes from a burned building, combined with the noxious fumes from the burned X-ray films and chemicals that still persisted in the neighborhood.

Coming to the scene so late, Jimmy and his comrade were at a great disadvantage. The dead and injured had been removed, the former to the county morgue, the latter to various hospitals within the city. Those people who had been present when the fire started were mostly gone. Policemen, firemen, doctors, and officials, nervously unstrung by the day's tragedies and taxed by conflict with the surging crowds and by repeated interviews with newspaper men, were blunt, brusque, and often rude. Crowds thronged about the place and it was difficult to move.

"We want to get hold of some of the people who saw the thing from the start and get statements from them," said Handley. "Then we

want to interview just as many doctors, nurses, patients, firemen, policemen, and others who were witnesses of the tragedy as we can get in touch with. We ought to have pictures of the interior of the wrecked building and the outside. And we should have some showing the work of rescue in progress. Maybe we can buy these latter pictures. You try for some photographs and I'll get interviews. When you get your pictures, hunt me up. I'll be somewhere about the place."

Jimmy thrust his police pass into his hatband and hurried toward the wrecked building. A policeman was guarding the entrance. Jimmy did not know whether the policeman would permit him to enter or not. A thought came to him. He stepped up to the bluecoat. "I'm told that you rescued more people than almost any other man on the force. I want your picture for tomorrow's paper. Just step inside the reception room where I can get you without this crowd and let me snap a picture, won't you please?" And Jimmy darted right on into the hospital.

The policeman, with a self-conscious look on his face followed. Jimmy didn't give him time

to say a word. "Stand right over there, where the light's good," he said. And when the policeman hesitated, Jimmy took him by the arm and shoved him against the wall. Then he backed off and snapped a picture of him.

"That's fine," said Jimmy, talking as fast as he could to prevent the policeman from saying anything, "but it doesn't show what it should. This reception room is hardly damaged at all. I want you with a background that will show the danger you had to face. Some of the rooms upstairs are pretty well torn to pieces, aren't they? I want a picture of you with that background. Come on." And Jimmy scurried up a stairway.

The policeman followed. By this time he had found his tongue. He seemed pleased with Jimmy's interest. "The worst looking room is over here," he said, and he led the way through a corridor filled with débris. The plaster had been blown from the ceiling, the walls were torn and broken, the window-glass was blown out, furniture was smashed and splintered, and the entire room was in a state of the utmost confusion.

"Stand right there," said Jimmy, posing his victim before a shattered and bulging section of wall. Then he snapped his picture before the policeman could protest.

"I believe I can get some better pictures up here than any I have," said Jimmy, and he took several pictures that perfectly portrayed the havoc wrought by the explosion.

"I must get back to my post," said the policeman, suddenly remembering that he was supposed to be guarding the front door.

Jimmy's heart fell. He thought he was about to be ordered out of the building. But he was equal to the occasion.

"You won't be leaving the place for a while, will you?" he asked. "I want to talk to you. I'll look you up at the front door just as soon as I get another picture or two."

The policeman hesitated. He glanced at Jimmy's police pass, and though he had been ordered to keep everybody out of the building except policemen, firemen, and hospital employees, he allowed Jimmy to remain, while he himself returned to guard the front door. Doubtless he

thought that the damage was already done, and that it would do no harm if Jimmy did get another picture or two. As for Jimmy, the moment the policeman's back was turned he scurried higher up in the wrecked building and took picture after picture.

His remark about the policeman's bravery had been a shot in the dark. Jimmy hadn't any idea whether the man had been present during the disaster or not. But he knew the weakness most folks have for wishing to appear like heroes, and he knew that policemen are no exception to the rule. As luck would have it, this policeman had actually had a share in the work of rescue. Jimmy found that out when he hurried back to the front door after getting all the pictures he wanted.

"Please spell your name for me," he said, as the policeman turned to greet him. "I want to be sure I get it right."

"L-a-f-f-e-r-t-y—Dennis Lafferty," the policeman spelled out, a letter at a time.

"That's fine," said Jimmy. "I just hate to get a man's name wrong. And I'd hate mighty

bad to get yours wrong after all the fine work you did."

Jimmy could see the man swelling with pride.

"I only did my duty," he said.

"Tell me about it," urged Jimmy. "Maybe the fellow who told me about it didn't have the story straight."

"Well," said Lafferty, "I was on duty directing traffic two blocks down the street when the explosion occurred. I heard it and ran up here. A woman was struggling to get out of the door right where we are, and I rushed up to help her. Just then I got a whiff of the gas. I knew right away what it was, for you see I was in the World War. So I jammed my handkerchief over my nose, grabbed the woman by the arm, and helped her out of the building. When I turned to go back I saw clouds of yellow gas swirling out through the door. I knew it was worse than useless to go back into the building, so I ran around to the side of the structure to see if there was some other way to get people out.

"By that time the firemen had begun to arrive, and they were driven back by the gas just as I

had been. Battalion Chief Michael Graham was the first chief on the grounds. When he saw it was useless to try to enter the first floor, he ordered a motor extension ladder run up to the roof. Then he and some of his men went up it. I scrambled after them. Two firemen hacked away a skylight and three or four of us was lowered into the building by ropes."

Just then Handley went hurrying past the front door.

"Frank," shouted Jimmy. "Come here a moment."

Handley turned, saw Jimmy, and came up the steps to him.

"How are you making out?" he asked.

"Fine," said Jimmy. "I want you to meet Policeman Dennis Lafferty. He was one of the first policemen to arrive after the explosion. Mr. Lafferty, this is Mr. Handley, my fellow reporter."

Handley held out his hand to the policeman.

"Mr. Lafferty was just telling me about the way he and some firemen got into the building by way of the roof. They saved a lot of people that

way. I've got some good snaps of Mr. Lafferty and I want to be sure to get his story correct." Then he turned to the policeman. "Won't you tell the story to Mr. Handley?" he asked. "I've got to get some more pictures. Handley and I are working together on this story."

"Sure," said the policeman. "It's all one to me."

He began to talk to Handley and Jimmy hurried away to get some exterior views. He was able to climb up on a building across the street and get a picture of the crowd that jammed the street and the open lawn by the side of the clinic building. Extension ladders were still raised to the roof and to different windows, and by good luck a number of firemen were coming down two of them. From other points of vantage Jimmy snapped the building and the crowd several times. When he had taken all the photographs he wanted, he hurried back to the front of the building. Handley had just met one of the hospital doctors, who had returned to the building to try to secure some important papers. The physician courteously stopped to answer Handley's ques-

tions. Jimmy seized the opportunity to talk to Policeman Lafferty again.

"Did you see any other people who helped in the rescue?" he asked.

"Sure. I saw lots of them. There were dozens of folks who had a hand in it."

"Tell me about some of them, won't you please? What was the most striking thing you saw?"

"I hardly know," said Lafferty. "But there was a big colored fellow who saved a lot of people. You ought to know about him."

"What did he do and what is his name?" asked Jimmy.

"His name is Chapin—Bob Chapin. He's a tremendous big fellow. He works in a garage near here. When he heard the explosion and found the hospital was afire, he grabbed up a ladder and ran up here quick. He put the ladder up to a window where a lot of people was trying to get out. The ladder was too short. So Chapin picked it up, rested it on his shoulders, and shoved the end up to the window. It just reached. Ten people come down the ladder while he held it on

his shoulders. Then he ran inside and carried out about as many more. He saved almost two dozen people."

Just then Handley came hurrying back. "We've got to move along, Jimmy," he said. "We've played in luck here. I've got more stuff than I ever dreamed I could get. Now we must hustle over to the hospitals and the morgue and get names and see how the injured are doing."

They said good-bye to Policeman Lafferty and thanked him for his help. Then they raced down the street toward the place where their taxi driver awaited. The man was there. They climbed into the car and were whirled off at speed to the Mt. Sinai Hospital, where most of the victims had been taken.

By this time the hospital authorities had secured some sort of order. Lists of names were posted, which helped the reporters greatly. As the emergency patients were placed everywhere, in corridors and hallways as well as in the wards, Jimmy and his comrade managed to reach several of them and get from them first-hand accounts of what happened in the hospital immediately

after the first explosion occurred. Also they were able to talk briefly with one or two nurses.

From the Mt. Sinai Hospital they drove to the other hospitals and finally to the morgue. They secured all the names available of both the dead and injured.

"We've had wonderful luck," said Handley. "I've got enough stuff to write columns, and I don't know how much more you have."

"Let me tell you what I picked up," said Jimmy. "Some of it may be better than some of the stuff you have. Anyway it will be different."

They hurried out to their taxi and got into it. "Here are my notes," said Jimmy. "Now let me tell you briefly what they mean."

Hastily he ran over the incidents he had gathered. Handley followed the notes as he listened. When Jimmy finished, Handley looked at his watch. "Give me that typewriter quick," he said. In another moment the keys were flying under his fingers.

"Wait," said Jimmy. "While you write I could be getting rescue pictures." Without a

word, Handley grabbed his things and stepped from the cab. "I'll write right here on the hospital steps," he said. "Hurry back."

Jimmy directed the taxi driver to take him to the nearest big newspaper. They drove off at speed. Jimmy found the city editor, told him who he was, and asked if he could buy a few rescue pictures for use in the *Morning Press* in New York. He showed his *Press* credentials. The city editor turned him over to the photograph staff and Jimmy got several good prints that showed firemen carrying unconscious victims down ladders at the wrecked hospital. He thanked the newspaper men for their help, ran out to his taxi, and was rushed back to his comrade. Handley was still pounding away on his typewriter, utterly oblivious to all that went on about him. He hardly even looked up when Jimmy sat down beside him and started to read the story Handley had written. Jimmy marveled as he watched his colleague dash off the tale. He wondered if he would ever be able to write like that. He was amazed at the gripping quality of the story Handley had written. At last the latter tore the final sheet from

his typewriter. He had made carbon copies as he wrote. Jimmy had already sorted out the two sets of sheets. He stuffed one copy of the story into his own pocket and handed the other copy to Handley.

"We've certainly played in luck," he said. "Let us hope I have as good luck getting back to the office."

Jimmy glanced up at the sky. So intent had he been upon his work that he had forgotten about the weather. What he saw now brought a deep frown to his face. "We'll have to be stepping," he said. "It's already six-thirty. I should have been off before this."

"I'll stay here and get more stuff," said Handley. "Good luck to you." He turned to the driver of the taxi. "To the airport as fast as you can make it," he said. "This man has to be in New York by eleven o'clock."

They dashed off at speed. At the airport Jimmy hurried to the office of the weather forecaster. There he found Mr. Beverly Graham, who was in charge of the entire eastern section of the Airways Weather Bureau, and who had been

the forecaster at Hadley Field in the days when Jimmy was in the U. S. mail service.

"Well, where in the world did you come from, Jimmy?" asked Mr. Graham, as he jumped to his feet and held out his hand. "I'm glad to see you."

"Not half as much as I am to see you," replied Jimmy, shaking Mr. Graham's hand heartily. "You know I'm flying for the New York *Press,* and I've got the story of the hospital disaster in my pocket and a camera full of pictures. I've got to reach New York as quick as I can get there. What's the weather like along the line?"

Mr. Graham frowned and looked at Jimmy intently. "I'm sorry you have to fly to-night," he said. "The weather couldn't be worse. There's the densest kind of a fog from one end of Pennsylvania to the other."

"I'm sorry, too," said Jimmy, looking glum. "But it has to be done. The *Press* simply *must* get these pictures."

"I know how you feel about it, Jimmy. If you must go, perhaps you can get up above the fog. Be sure to ride high and follow your radio

beacon exactly. That'll guide you all right if you don't have a forced landing. Your greatest difficulty will probably be to get down safely. The fog isn't so bad along the coast yet, but we can't tell what conditions will be like when you reach there. The wind is pretty quiet. There's a twenty-mile wind at 5,000 feet. I can't tell you what it is like above that. We couldn't see our balloons beyond that height, and even this information is two hours old. Fog and clouds have shut out everything up high the past hour. Here's a weather chart for you with the latest news we have been able to collect. Fog is solid through Pennsylvania."

Jimmy studied the chart for a moment. His face grew very serious. Then he said, "Thanks ever so much. I must be off. Good-bye." He held out his hand and the forecaster shook it warmly.

"I don't like it, Jimmy," he said. "I hope you get through safely. Remember to fly high and follow your radio beacon carefully. Don't take any chance of getting lost in the fog. We'll do all we can to help you make it."

CHAPTER VI

Flying Blind Over the Graveyard of Airplanes

JIMMY looked very sober as he climbed into his plane. He was about to tackle the meanest job a pilot is called upon to attempt. Had he been at the other end of the line, starting westward, with the wind in his face, instead of starting eastward, with the breeze at his back, he would hardly have dared to attempt it. But inasmuch as he did not have to make a landing in Pennsylvania, he was willing to try it, although the weather man had suggested that by the time he reached Long Island it might be foggy there also. Jimmy decided to take the chance.

But he wasn't going to take any more chances than he absolutely had to take. So he switched on his navigation lights, tested his landing lights,

made sure his flares were hooked, ready for release, and glanced at his instruments. Then he speeded up his engine and listened to its roar. The instant he was satisfied that everything was working perfectly, he took off.

He hopped into the wind, then circled back to the east, and was away like an arrow. Although the atmosphere at Cleveland was only beginning to grow foggy, before Jimmy had risen a hundred feet in the air the bright lights of the airport began to be blurred. As Jimmy passed directly over the great hangar, after circling, he could barely tell where it was. In another minute low clouds had wiped out every trace of the earth. No matter where he looked, nothing was visible but thick, clinging banks of fog.

Jimmy had been in fog before, but he had never made a trip such as this one promised to be. Always the fogs he had ridden through had dissipated after a time, but this fog-bank bade fair to cover every inch of the four hundred and fifty miles or so to his home field. The possibilities of getting lost, of crashing, of meeting with dire disaster in a flight of such length, were

too many for Jimmy to allow himself to consider them.

He did not permit himself even to think of these possibilities. Instead, he called up every bit of flying ability he possessed, to meet the situation. At two or three hundred feet elevation he had gone blind. From that point onward, he had to fly wholly by his instruments.

Setting his course by his compass, he sat listening to the guiding note of the radio beacon, his eyes glued to the instrument board. From his compass his eyes darted to his turn-and-bank indicator, then to his air speed indicator. Occasionally he glanced at his engine instruments, to see that his propeller was making the necessary revolutions per minute, that the engine temperature was not too high, that his oil pressure remained constant.

But mostly he kept watch of his speed and of his position. The steel ball in the centre of the turn-and-bank indicator had to be kept right in the centre. Every time the ball began to slide one way or the other, Jimmy had to bring his ship back to a level keel, for the moving steel ball

showed that he was beginning to dip to one side or the other. Sense of balance told him little or nothing; and had it not been for his indicator, he might soon have been flying upside down, as many a pilot before him had done. Nor could he allow his ship to drop below a speed of sixty miles an hour, lest it come crashing to earth.

All the while the radio beacon signal was buzzing loudly in his ears. "Dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah," the signal sounded. It came to him with startling intensity. That was because his ship was close to the beacon itself. As he traveled onward, Jimmy knew, the signal would grow fainter and fainter, for during the first half of the flight to Bellefonte he would be guided by the signals from the airport he had just left. Beyond that he would be guided by the Bellefonte signals, and he knew these would grow ever louder as he neared that field.

Up he climbed, and up and up, seeking to get above the fog. Again and again he glanced at his altimeter, but though he had risen to five thousand feet, and then six and seven and eight thousand, he was still in dense mist. He contin-

ued to climb, to watch his instruments, to listen to the radio beacon. All the time he was trying to check his position. He watched his air speed indicator. He watched his tachometer, which indicated his revolutions per minute. He watched his clock. He checked one against the other. With a twenty-mile wind at his back, Jimmy figured he must be making fully one hundred and fifty miles an hour. At that speed he should make his home field in close to three hours. Then he should have to make the trip to the New York office of the *Press*. It looked to Jimmy as though he ought easily to reach the *Press* office by eleven o'clock. The thought heartened him.

He could travel faster, if he had to, but he did not want to drive his ship as fast on the return trip as he had driven it in coming west. It was too hard on the ship. So he watched his instruments and held his plane to the speed indicated.

All the while he climbed. Up he went steadily. From eight thousand feet he climbed to nine, then ten. Still the fog was unbroken. But his engine worked marvelously in the heavy air and

he kept his ship nosing higher and higher. Suddenly, at eleven thousand feet, he shot up above the fog. The night was clear as crystal. Above him twinkled innumerable stars. With a deep sigh of relief Jimmy climbed a little higher, then straightened out and rode on level keel. Below him spread endless masses of cloud, more wonderful than an ocean, dimly lighted by the stars above. So long as he could ride above the fog his trip was now an easy one. He had only to follow his compass and the radio beacon. The difficulty would come when he had to drop down through the fog and make a landing.

While Jimmy was thus fighting both to insure his safety and to gain his goal, agencies of which he was not aware were also at work to try to make his progress safe. Hardly had Jimmy left the ground at the Cleveland Airport before Beverly Graham hurried into the radio room.

"Sparks," he said to the radio man, "I wish you would send a message on your printer saying that Jimmy Donnelly, flying for the New York *Morning Press*, just left here, heading for Long Island. The message will reach caretakers at

beacons all along the route. Tell all caretakers to report his progress to me as he goes over their beacons. Nobody else is flying east at this time that we know of and it's very doubtful if anybody else will go over the route to-night."

The wireless man turned to his printer and began to pound out the message on the keyboard. But the machine on which he was writing, though it somewhat resembled a typewriter, was not a typewriter at all, but an electric printing or teletype machine, which reproduced the message on similar machines at Bellefonte and Hadley Field and other stations as fast as it was written. In no time, therefore, these two Air Mail stations and the caretakers at various landing fields, knew that Jimmy was flying east in the fog. Thus as Jimmy passed over Mercer and Clarion and other points on the airway in western Pennsylvania his progress was promptly reported to his friend, the chief forecaster.

But long before Jimmy reached the "graveyard of airplanes" he himself was aware that Beverly Graham was making a special effort in his behalf. When he was only a short distance

out of Cleveland he heard the hourly weather broadcast from the Cleveland radio man. Jimmy listened intently, though there was little they could tell him about the weather that he did not already know. The usual, stereotyped broadcast contained no reference to the wind. That was the one thing Jimmy wanted to know about. A moment later he heard the Cleveland radio man saying: "Mr. Donnelly, in the New York *Morning Press* plane, will please note that the wind has shifted slightly from west to southwest and has increased to twenty-five miles an hour. He will also please listen carefully for a message when he passes over Bellefonte."

"Good old Beverly," said Jimmy. "He never forgets a friend. He didn't want me to fly tonight, but now that I am up in the air he's doing all he can for me. I wonder what he has instructed Bellefonte to do. I'll thank him at once."

When Jimmy's plane was built it had been equipped with a radio receiving set. But about two weeks before he was ordered to Cleveland, Jimmy had succeeded in having a sending set in-

stalled in the plane, thus bringing his ship right up to date. Not even all the mail planes had sending sets as yet, though some of them did.

Jimmy picked up his instrument, put the mouthpiece to his lips, and sent this message into the air: "Jimmy Donnelly, of the *Morning Press,* speaking. Cleveland weather forecast received. Also special notice as to force and direction of the wind. Will get into touch with Bellefonte as I go over. Thanks very much for help. I shall need all I can get."

He replaced the mouthpiece and settled back in his seat. A quick glance at his instrument board assured him that all was working well. He looked at his clock and tried to figure out his position. Suddenly he became aware that the buzzing in his ears had altered. No longer did he hear the regular "dah, dah, dah, dah, dah," which told him he was directly on the air line. Instead Jimmy heard the signal "dot dah, dot dah, dot dah, dot dah, dot dah." He knew he was to the left of the course.

"That's the work of the wind," thought Jimmy. "Shifting to the southwest, it has

blown me to the northeast of the line. I'll move over to the right a little."

He kicked his rudder bar, shoved his stick over ever so slightly, and sat listening. "Dot dah, dot dah, dot dah," sang the ear phones, but presently the signal changed. "Dah, dah, dah, dah, dah," it went. He was back on the course.

"Gee, but I'm glad I'm flying in the year 1929, and not half a dozen years ago," thought Jimmy. "I'd soon be way off my course and never know the difference if I didn't have this radio set. I tell you, a compass doesn't help much when there's a cross-wind. Half a dozen years ago, before there were any radio beacons, I'd have had to make this trip by dead reckoning, and I'd probably have landed in Connecticut, or Massachusetts, or any old place except Long Island."

He flew on, listening carefully to the buzz of the radio beacon, and intent upon his task. He was pleased to know that his friend, the forecaster, had taken so much trouble on his account. He would have been still more pleased could he have known to what extent the weather man was

laboring in his behalf. For after Jimmy left the Cleveland Airport, Beverly Graham sat down at his desk and devoted himself to doing all that he could to get Jimmy through in safety.

Suddenly Jimmy heard a sharp signal, sounding above the dull buzz of the directional beacon. A smile of satisfaction flitted over Jimmy's face. "I'm right over Brookville," he muttered. Quickly he glanced at his clock, then made a rapid calculation. "I'm right on the line and right where I ought to be at this minute," he thought. "I'm making almost exactly 150 miles an hour."

What he had heard was a marker beacon. At intervals along the airway, radio signals are sent up vertically, just as they are sent horizontally from the radio beacons at Cleveland, Bellefonte, and Hadley Field. These vertical radio beams are audible only for the brief spaces of time it takes a plane to sweep over the stations sending them. The present signal was gone almost as soon as Jimmy heard it, but it gave him a world of information and assurance. It told him, not merely that he was on the line, which he already

knew, but it also told him the exact point on that line which he had reached. He soared onward with increased confidence.

Intently he watched his instrument board. From time to time the radio beacon warned him that he was being blown from the direct line, and he nosed his plane back to the path. Everything seemed to be going well. His clock told him that he should be nearing Bellefonte, the half-way point between Cleveland and Hadley Field. Also, the radio signals were now so much more powerful that he knew he must be close to the beacon emitting them.

For some time Jimmy rode with only the roar of his own engine and the buzzing of the radio beacon reaching his ears. He was certain, however, that he must be near Bellefonte. The radio beacon signals came so loudly. Suddenly, above the steady buzz of the directional beacon came the sharp signal of the Bellefonte marker beacon. Jimmy drew a breath of relief. "Halfway," he muttered, "and everything as fine as silk."

Hardly had he heard the marker beacon before

a voice sounded in his ears: "This is Bellefonte Weather Bureau speaking to Jimmy Donnelly, of the New York *Morning Press*. As nearly as we can judge by the sound of your engine, you are directly over the field. Fog continues bad throughout Pennsylvania. Wind remains unchanged—southwest, twenty-five miles an hour. Conditions much better after you pass the mountains. Some fog in New Jersey and may be more before you get there."

Instantly Jimmy answered through his sending set. "This is Jimmy Donnelly speaking to Bellefonte," he said. "Your message received. Thanks ever so much. Have you any information about weather between Hadley Field and Long Island?"

"No," came the reply, "but will tell Hadley to get latest information and talk to you as you go by. Good luck to you."

"Please tell Long Island I am coming," said Jimmy. "I ought to hit there about ten o'clock. Please ask the radio man there to listen in for me about that time. I'll get in touch with him after I pass Hadley. Thanks ever so much."

Jimmy went sailing straight on through the fog. Ahead of him lay the worst place on the entire mail route, the Woodward Pass. But he was light of heart. He knew where he was, he knew how high he had to be to pass safely over the mountains, and he had no fear of losing his way. Had he been left to reckon out his position himself, he would have been worried and uncertain, no matter how regularly his propeller turned, no matter how accurate his clock. But with the radio keeping him on the course and telling him the precise moment when he passed over Bellefonte, there could be neither doubt nor uncertainty. So he flew on, almost jubilant. He was making the schedule he had set for himself. He felt sure he was going to succeed.

On he went, carefully watching his instruments, and trying to figure his position from moment to moment. Now he felt sure he was past the mountains beyond Bellefonte and flying over the lovely Penn's Valley. In a few minutes he was approaching Woodward Pass. He pictured Winkelblech Mountain rearing its great bulk directly in the line of his flight, where he

should turn to the right and shoot through the pass. But to-night he was not shooting passes. He was thousands of feet above the pass. Suddenly, for the merest fraction of a second, he thought he saw a gleam of light. It must have been the beacon on Winkelblech, he thought, shining through some rift in the fog. In a few moments he knew he must be past the mountains and sailing over the beautiful Buffalo Valley. But only his instruments told him so. Below him he could see nothing but fog.

Ahead of him lay more mountains—wicked ones, too, through the great reaches of the anthracite coal field, where the earth is as rough and rugged as the outside of a black walnut shell. But the furrows in the earth are great mountain ridges, and the wrinkles are hills and precipices.

On he flew, following the radio beacon intently, watching his time, calculating his position. He could see absolutely nothing. He wanted to see nothing but the instruments before him, for it was almost terrifying to look out into the fog. His instruments seemed friendly to him,

Now he felt sure he was over Sunbury. One hour more would bring him to Hadley Field, for it was exactly 150 miles between the two points. In half an hour, three quarters of an hour at most, the worst part of the trip would be over. The Pennsylvania mountains would be passed, and underfoot would lie the flat agricultural lands of New Jersey, where he might hope to land in safety if he were forced down, though there seemed to be little chance of that.

He rushed on through the night. Ahead of him, he knew, the country was far less rugged for a distance. The mountains melted into hills of perhaps eight hundred feet elevation, and there were many farms and smooth fields. But soon after he should pass Elysburg, just ahead, the land would rise up sharp again, in hills twelve hundred feet high. Beyond them was lower land once more, and then the ridges climbed up, just before Ringtown was reached, until their summits towered two thousand feet aloft. Little did Jimmy care about that. He was far, far above them. The mountains meant nothing to him. Already the marker beacon at Numidia

was sounding in his ears. Soon, now, he would be entirely past the mountains.

Suddenly he noticed that his engine was beginning to heat. He glanced at his oil gauge and found that it was no longer working. Instantly he looked at his tachometer. His engine speed was falling rapidly. Jimmy opened his throttle. There was no answering response from the engine. Instead, it beat slower and slower. It was making twelve hundred revolutions per minute. It fell to nine, then seven hundred. His ship slowed dangerously. He began to lose altitude. There was nothing to do but come down. Otherwise he would soon fall. He decided to try to make the landing field at Numidia. Then he saw that he could not do it. The wind at his back would prevent it. His engine was too weak to fight the breeze. It would blow him far to one side of the little landing field.

An icy feeling grew about Jimmy's heart. He knew what was coming—a forced landing among the mountains, in the densest sort of fog. Already he was far down in the mist clouds. Vision was absolutely cut off. For a single in-

stant he felt numb, almost paralyzed. Then he rallied all the skill he had, to fight for his life.

The next landing field was at Ringtown. It was only eleven miles from Numidia to Ringtown, and he had already passed over part of the distance. He must make the landing field at Ringtown. He must keep his ship in the air until he could reach that field. If only his trouble had occurred a bit sooner, he could have made the field at Numidia. The marker beacon would have helped him to get down to the right spot. How he was going to tell where the Ringtown field was, in this awful fog, Jimmy did not know. He could not even guess.

Between him and Ringtown were those stern and beetling hilltops—those mountains that towered heavenward for two thousand feet. Could he get over them? With his face drawn and serious Jimmy glanced at his altimeter. He was still well above that height, but he was losing elevation steadily. Could he get over those mountain crests? Could he find the landing field if he did get over?

Suddenly he thought of his radio. He put the

mouthpiece to his lips. "This is Donnelly of the New York *Press*," he said firmly and evenly. "I am between Numidia and Ringtown. My oil line has gone bad. My engine is failing. I am losing altitude fast. I am trying to get over the mountains west of Ringtown and land at that field. May need help."

Jimmy had no idea whether or not any one would hear his call. Ordinarily the radio men would not be listening in for messages. Yet there was a chance that they might be listening to-night, because of the very bad weather. But Jimmy was reckoning without Beverly Graham. The moment he found that Jimmy had a sending set, the latter had issued orders that a constant watch be kept on the air. Hence Jimmy's message came to waiting ears. The Bellefonte radio man caught it.

He didn't even wait to answer Jimmy. There is no caretaker at the little Ringtown landing field. The Bellefonte operator knew that. But he snatched up his telephone and tried to get a connection with a man at Ringtown who had control over the field. The telephone operator

was a long time in getting the connection. When finally the Bellefonte operator got his man, he said hastily: "A flier is making a forced landing at your field right away. See if you can do something to help him."

But meantime, though the operator almost failed in his effort to get help for Jimmy, help from another source was at hand. Johnnie Lee had gotten Jimmy's parachute message and read it. When night came on, and he saw what the weather was like, he doubted very much if Jimmy would attempt to return to New York. But if Jimmy did fly over, Johnnie wanted to signal him. He wanted his old friend to know that he had received his message. He knew that it was idle to attempt to send a message up through the fog with so impotent a thing as his flash-light. And so for a long time Johnnie had been at work preparing for a bonfire.

Fearful of setting fire to his father's buildings, Johnnie had been stacking up old boards and rails on top of a pile of old wood that stood close to one edge of his father's farm, and almost adjoining the landing field. He had thrown coal

oil on the pile, saturating it thoroughly, and he had a bucket of gasoline all ready to throw on the heap before he touched a match to it.

But that was not all. As Jimmy had suspected, Johnnie had a radio sending set, like most of the other members of the Wireless Patrol. It would not carry his voice so very many miles, but Johnnie knew it would carry well enough for him to hold a conversation with Jimmy as the latter neared Ringtown. Even now he was at his radio, listening. He had been there for some time. He had caught the weather forecast from Bellefonte. He felt sure that if Jimmy had left Cleveland, he ought to be nearing Ringtown. So he listened hopefully yet fearfully. And suddenly he caught the very message that galvanized the Bellefonte operator into action. Jimmy was calling for help. He was near at hand. He was trying to make the Ringtown field, but there was nothing to guide him.

The instant Jimmy stopped speaking, Johnnie sent a call speeding through the air. "Jimmy Donnelly," he said. "This is Johnnie Lee speaking. I heard your call for help. I have a big

bonfire ready to light. I will touch it off at once. Maybe you can see it through the fog. The landing field is just beyond it. Is there anything else I can do to help you?"

Instantly there was an answer. "God bless you, Johnnie. Light your fire quick. I'm coming down fast, but I believe I'm going to clear the mountains. Get your fire lighted quick."

Johnnie did not tarry a single instant. Out of the house he darted and away he rushed across the fields to his pile of wood, heedless of the dark and the fog. He knew the way perfectly and his flash-light helped him to avoid loose stones. He reached his beacon without a fall or a twisted ankle.

Grabbing up his bucket of gasoline he threw it over his pile of wood. Then he struck a match and tossed it toward the heap. There was a terrific burst of flames that shot fifty feet into the air. Then the oil-soaked pile of wood caught fire. The flames soared upward. The fire grew intense. The oily wood burned with terrific heat. The glare of the flames lighted the entire region. Even through the fog the flare of the fire could

be seen for a long distance. It turned the mist into glowing clouds. It shone through rifts in the fog, like the electric beams of searchlights penetrating the openings between cloud masses.

Suddenly Johnnie thought he heard the drone of a motor. Then the sound faded away. The noise of the fire drowned out more distant sounds. The snap and crackle and hiss and roar of the burning heap shut out every trace of the hum of a propeller. For a moment Johnnie stood near his beacon, vainly straining his ears for some further trace of an airplane. Then he ran hastily off to one side. Again he heard the faint drone of a motor. Then the sound died away. But Johnnie felt sure he had not been deceived. Jimmy was going to make it. He was going to reach the field in safety.

Again Johnnie strained his ears, to catch another shred of sound. A puff of wind brought him what he was listening for, loudly, unmistakably. Once more the sound died away. But Johnnie knew he had not been mistaken. He had heard an airplane. Suddenly the sound came to him with startling distinctness. He strained both

ears and eyes as he peered upward through the fog.

Suddenly there was a bright glow aloft. Johnnie's heart stood still. He listened for an explosion. He was frozen with horror. The plane overhead—Jimmy's plane—was afire. He gazed fearfully into the concealing fog to see where the plane was falling. He saw it coming down with a rush, flaming fiercely. The cloud of fog was all aglow with the brilliant light. It shone even brighter than Johnnie's bonfire. Regardless of what might happen to him if the plane exploded, Johnnie rushed toward the spot where it was apparently going to crash. Johnnie reached the place. He paused, looking upward. He held his breath, waiting for the smash. Down came the glowing light to the earth. Johnnie let out a yell of relief. It was not the plane that had fallen, but a flare that Jimmy must have dropped.

Quickly Johnnie looked aloft again. He stared through the fog banks. Dimly he saw something glowing. He watched, breathless. Almost instantly the glow over his head became two luminous spots in the mist. They grew brighter

fast. Now Johnnie was certain he knew what he was looking at. The luminous spots were the landing lights of a descending plane. They seemed to be jumping right at him. Johnnie knew the plane was coming straight toward him. It was almost upon him. He leaped to one side. He was not a moment too soon. The descending plane swished past him, seemed to rise lightly, then leveled off, hit the ground heavily, bounced, came to earth again, and went rolling and jolting straight across the landing field.

Johnnie raced after the ship. It came to rest. A figure stepped from the cabin. Johnnie raced toward the man.

"Hello!" he cried.

"Hello yourself," came the answer. "Who are you?"

"This is Johnnie. Thank God you got down safe."

They clasped hands and stood silent.

CHAPTER VII

A Forced Landing in a Fog

FOR a second the two old friends held each other's hand. Then some one was heard running toward them. A man appeared in the fog.

"It's the man who looks after the field," said Johnnie, as soon as he could distinguish the approaching figure. "I suppose he heard you land and has come to help."

The man rushed up. "Are you all right?" he asked anxiously. "Did you get down without much damage?"

"Don't believe I broke a thing," said Jimmy. "You know my plane is built with unusually strong underpinning. Let's take a look at her."

Johnnie's bonfire gave them enough light to see by. Quickly they examined the plane. Nothing was wrong externally.

"Let's take a look at the oil line," said Jimmy. "Something went wrong with it."

He reached into his plane and drew out his flash-light. "Hold it," he said, shoving it into Johnnie's hand. Then he turned and opened the cowling of his engine.

With practiced eye he glanced along the length of the oil line. At first nothing wrong was apparent. But on the bottom of the engine compartment was a telltale pool of oil. Jimmy twisted his head and got a look at the underside of the oil line. The pipe was cracked open along the seam. The crack extended for several inches. Practically all the oil had dripped from the engine.

"Vibration must have done that," said Jimmy, as he turned to his companions and explained what was wrong. "Likely it happened when I went west this afternoon, for I flew the ship pretty hard. I suppose the seam gave way then, and the hard trip to-night has opened it up. Have you got any tire tape, Johnnie?"

"Plenty of it," said Johnnie. "I'll fetch you some."

"Bring all you can get," shouted Jimmy after the fast-disappearing Johnnie. "And arrange for some oil. I'll need a lot. Hurry as fast as you can, Johnnie. I mustn't lose a minute."

Jimmie stepped into the cabin of his ship and threw open a locker, in which he carried odds and ends that might be useful to him in just such an emergency as this. There were rolls of tire tape here. Jimmy grabbed them. In another moment he was rapidly taping the broken pipe-line. Over the actual opening in the seam he wound several thicknesses of the tape. Then he began to twist the stuff around the remainder of the little pipe. There was no telling how soon the rest of the seam would open, and Jimmy meant to play safe. He used all the tape he had, and when Johnnie came back with additional rolls, he added these to his reënforcements. When all the tape was wrapped, he breathed a sigh of relief.

"I don't believe we'll lose any more oil," he said, "even if the whole seam opens up. She's wound tight and thick. Now, how about oil? Could you get any?"

"Dad's bringing all we have," said Johnnie.

"We buy it in thirty-gallon barrels, as we can get it so much cheaper."

"Thank heaven you've got plenty of it," said Jimmy. "It'll take a lot. How is your father going to get it here?"

"On the truck," said Johnnie. And even as he spoke they heard the chugging of a motor and a farm truck came nosing through the fog.

Jimmy stepped to the truck and greeted Mr. Lee. "It's mighty kind of you to help me out," he said. "I thought I was done, when I was forced down. But now I can take off again and I can still get to New York on time. I'll lose half an hour here probably, but there's still time enough if I don't have any more trouble."

Johnnie filled the oil tank as fast as he could. Jimmy snatched the opportunity to look his motor over. Everything seemed to be right. Then he watched the oil gauge and told Johnnie when to stop pouring oil. He made everything tight about the cowling, gave the ship a final inspection under the rays of his flash-light, and stepped into his cabin.

Now he would know whether he might possibly

still succeed in his enterprise. He was fearful that the engine might have overheated and been injured when it was running with insufficient oil. Would it start now? And if it started, would it run? Could he depend upon it? Would it have power enough to lift him from the ground? Could he trust it to raise him high enough aloft to clear the mountains so close in front of him?

Fearfully Jimmy pressed the starter. There was an explosion, the propeller turned over once or twice and stopped. Jimmy's heart almost stopped with it. The engine was ruined. It would not go. He had failed in his effort. He had lost his big opportunity. All these thoughts flashed through Jimmy's mind. Then came another. "It's got to go," he muttered.

He choked the engine and again touched the starter. For a moment the starter whirred noisily, but the engine did not explode. Then there was a bang, the propeller whirled madly about, and the engine began to hum smoothly.

"There wasn't any gas in it the first time," thought Jimmy.

Then he sat and listened. His motor ran as

well as ever it had run. It was purring as smoothly as a sewing-machine. He ran his eye over his instrument board. The oil gauge was registering now. Everything looked right. He did not take time to make his usual tests. Throttling down his engine he leaned from the cabin.

"A million thanks, everybody," he said. "I'll get into touch with you later. I've got to be off this instant or I'll be late with my stuff. Goodbye and good luck to you all. Thanks ever so much."

He closed the cabin door and stepped into the pilot's seat. The engine began to pick up. It beat faster and faster. Presently the plane started to roll forward, very slowly. Jimmy drove it straight on until he could see the little, low boundary lights that marked the edge of the landing field. He drove the ship close to them, turned it about to head it into the wind, then went charging blindly back across the field through the fog, almost straight at the reddish blur that he knew was Johnnie's bonfire. His engine functioned perfectly. He gathered speed. Suddenly the plane lifted from the ground and soared al-

most directly above the blazing pyre. For a single instant it was visible in the red mist above the flames. Then it vanished from view in the fog as a stone disappears beneath the water.

Inside the plane Jimmy sat tense. His first effort was to gain elevation. Before him, at almost no distance, the hills once more reached an elevation of 2,000 feet. He had to climb a thousand feet to reach their tops, another thousand to be safe. But there was this factor in his favor. He was flying with the wind. The air would rush upward when it struck the slopes of the mountains and he would be borne upward with it.

But Jimmy was not waiting for any ascending currents of air to carry him aloft. He opened his throttle wide and climbed as rapidly as he could push his ship upward. For a few moments he thought of nothing else. He wanted to gain altitude. With every second he breathed more easily. His altimeter showed him he was mounting fast. Now he was at 1,300 feet, now 1,500, now 1,800, now 2,000. Up he went. His altimeter registered 2,500 feet. Jimmy knew he was

safe. No hilltop in the region towered so high. At 3,000 feet he felt still better. But he did not stop climbing until he was thousands of feet aloft.

All the time he had been climbing, Jimmy had also been trying to keep on his course. The radio beacon made that easily possible. All the time it had been singing in Jimmy's ears, " dah, dah, dah, dah," and Jimmy thought he had never heard sweeter music.

Assured of sufficient elevation, certain that he was on the line, Jimmy felt sure that nothing could now prevent him from reaching his goal. He was elated. He might have broken his landing gear at Ringtown. The plane might have nosed over and damaged his propeller. He might even have crashed. Any one of these things might have happened and one of them almost certainly would have happened, had it not been for Johnnie Lee's beacon. Added to the light of the revolving beam from the landing field tower and his own flare, it had enabled Jimmy to get down safely. It wouldn't matter if he did smash his landing gear when he came down on Long Island. He would then be at his destination.

So Jimmy sailed ahead jubilantly. And his jubilation increased as he flew along. He knew just where he was. He glanced at his clock, to check the time, and ran his eye over all his other instruments. Everything seemed to be working right.

Meantime, the forces on the ground had not been idle. The moment that Jimmy took off from Ringtown, the man who had helped Jimmy there hurried to the telephone and informed the Bellefonte radio man that Jimmy had landed safely at Ringtown, had repaired a leak in his oil line, and had taken off again. At almost the same time word came to Bellefonte to the effect that a plane had just passed over the Park Place beacon. That was reassuring news, for it told the watchers that Jimmy had gotten safely aloft once more.

On he went, boring through the fog. To this he gave small heed. His entire attention was centred on his instrument board. He watched that like a hawk. From his turn and balance indicator, which told him when he was on a level keel and was flying straight, his eyes jumped to

his tachometer, to his oil gauge, his oil temperature gauge, his altimeter, and so on from instrument to instrument. But most often his eye fell upon the oil gauge. Despite his confident remarks about the security of the pipe-line, he was none too sure that he would not have further trouble with it. But none developed, though Jimmy soared along, mile after mile.

A half hour passed. Jimmy had his eye on his clock. "We ought to be close to Easton," he thought. He glanced out through the fog, though he had no hope of seeing anything but mist. Nor did he see anything else. Yet the mist had a luminous quality he had not noticed at any other time. He sped on and presently the mist lost its luminous effect. For a moment Jimmy was puzzled. Then a look of inquiry came to his face. "Could that have been from the lights of Easton?" he thought. "If it was, the fog is not so dense."

He flew on. The radio beacon kept him straight on the course. His clock and his tachometer assured him that he was well past Easton. He felt easier in his mind. There were no more

mountains to face. The waves of land that make Pennsylvania so rugged were flattening out. Nowhere before him, Jimmy knew, were there hills higher than 800 feet; and soon he would be over country as flat as a sea on a calm day. The thought cheered him. His radio signals were growing much stronger. He knew that meant that he was approaching Hadley Field. He began to peer out into the mist, hoping to find it lessening.

Presently a bright flash of light shone for a second against a bank of fog. Jimmy almost cried out with joy. It was the beam of a revolving beacon. Soon he saw another flash of light. He began to descend and came down cautiously until he was within a thousand feet of the earth. And now he could see, here and there as he flew, luminous patches in the fog. He knew well that these bright spots were the lights of towns. He calculated his position and slowly dropped down another hundred feet.

He knew now that he was nearing Hadley Field. All about him were Jersey towns. He could begin to make them out more plainly. The

mist was no longer in unbroken clouds. It was growing thin and stringy. Occasionally through a rift in it he could catch a clear glimpse of lights on the ground. And now he began to see the beams of the revolving lights at frequent intervals.

He decided to try to talk with the Hadley radio man. Picking up his mouthpiece, he sent forth a call: "Jimmy Donnelly, in the New York *Press* plane, calling Hadley Field."

The call was answered as soon as he had done speaking. "Hadley Field answering Donnelly," came the reply, sharp and crisp. "Is everything all right with you?"

"Couldn't be better," replied Jimmy, "except for fog. That is growing less. What can you tell me about the weather between here and Long Island?"

"It improves all the way. Long Island just told us that there was almost no fog there."

"Won't you ask them to have a taxi ready for me when I arrive," said Jimmy. "I've got to rush some films to the *Press* office. I mustn't lose a minute."

"We'll call them right away and tell them you want a taxi. Have you any idea where you are?"

"I ought to be near—why, there's your neon light and the beacon over the hangar. Now it's gone again. I must be very close to Hadley. It didn't seem to be more than two miles away."

"We can hear your motor," came back the reply. "We'll tell Long Island you'll be there very soon. Good luck to you. We'll call them at once."

Plainer and plainer Jimmy could see the glowing lights below him. He dropped down another hundred feet. Suddenly he heard the marker beacon at Hadley Field. Now he was sure he knew where he was. There were the lights of New Brunswick. Beyond was Metuchen. Much farther away was a glow that must be Perth Amboy. Jimmy thanked his lucky stars. No longer would he have the radio beacon to direct him. He must find his own way. Unless fog arose immediately, there would be no difficulty about that. In a few minutes he would be at his airport.

The radio beacon had already ceased to beat

in his ears. He was past Hadley Field. He set his course direct for his destination, noted the compass direction, and flew on. Soon he was over Staten Island. He flew above the Narrows and was over Long Island. Below him for miles glowed the lights of Brooklyn. His plane rushed on like an eagle. Soon Brooklyn was behind him. His own field lay just before him. There were fog clouds and shreds of fog, but it was easy enough to see down between them. Another half hour, Jimmy knew, would probably put the whole island under a deep blanket of fog. He had often seen the fog making up as it was now. But he cared nothing at all about what conditions would be like in half an hour. For he was home. His landing field was just under him.

He nosed his ship downward, shut off his power, and came down in a long glide. The field was well lighted. He could see the earth perfectly. He put his ship down in a three point landing, and rolled across the turf. Then he taxied rapidly to his hangar, gave a shouted order to fill the gas and oil tanks, threw off his parachute, grabbed his camera, and rushed out to

the waiting taxi. In another second he was speeding toward Manhattan.

It still lacked several minutes of his deadline when he rushed into the *Press* office and laid his story on the city editor's desk. A copy boy ran to the photograph department with his camera. Jimmy sank into a seat. He suddenly felt weak. He was all atremble. It was the let down after the tremendous strain he had undergone.

The managing editor came walking out of his office. He held out his hand and shook Jimmy's warmly. "It was a fine piece of work, Jimmy," he said. "Handley telegraphed us about you and the bad night. We have followed you all the way across. You had us pretty badly frightened when you told Bellefonte your engine was failing and you were making a forced landing in the mountains. And our relief was great when we found you were patched up and on your way again. It is equalled only by our pleasure in seeing you."

Jimmy looked abashed. Then he lost all sense of self-consciousness as the thought of Johnnie Lee popped into his head.

"I might not be here now, Mr. Johnson," he said, "if it had not been for my old friend Johnnie Lee. It was his bonfire that saved me. Without it I should almost certainly have crashed. I owe my life to him and the *Press* owes its pictures and its story to him. He wants to be a reporter, Mr. Johnson. Can't you help him? Haven't you a job for him?"

"Has he done any reporting, Jimmy? Has he had any experience?"

"No, sir. But he is clever enough. He could learn quickly, if you would give him a chance. And I have no doubt he would be glad to work for very little pay or maybe none at all until he learned how to do the work. Can't you take him on, Mr. Johnson?"

"I'm sorry, Jimmy. I'll gladly send him a check for his help to-night. We are always willing to pay anybody who helps us get news. But we have no use for green reporters here. We need trained men. We seldom hire cubs any more. We want men with experience."

"But you took me on," protested Jimmy, "and I was perfectly green."

"You came on as a flier, Jimmy. And you would be the last man in the world to say you were green at that job."

"But I learned how to get news. So could Johnnie."

"Yes, you did, Jimmy. You picked up the knack readily. And if you continue to improve, you'll make a great reporter some day. But you evidently had it in you."

"Maybe Johnnie does, too."

"I'm sorry, Jimmy. We can't possibly take him on. But if he got some experience—if he showed us that he knew how to handle a story—I might give him a chance. I feel very much indebted to him. It was a great thing for you to get through with that story, even if you were delayed."

Jimmy looked alarmed. "The story will make the edition, won't it?" he asked.

"Absolutely. And we'll scoop every other paper in town on pictures. The only other pictures in the city were sent by wire, and they aren't half as good as actual photographs. What's more, we'll have one feature that no other paper

in the country will have. That is the story of how the *Morning Press'* flying reporter dared a fog that stopped even the Air Mail, and got through. The story is already in type, Jimmy."

CHAPTER VIII

Jimmy Saves a Boyhood Friend

JIMMY was almost startled at the managing editor's announcement. Then he felt embarrassed. It had never occurred to him that his paper would print the story of his flight. He had not thought his flight worth telling about. In fact, he had not thought of anything except getting back with the news. Had not Handley wired the managing editor about the perilous trip Jimmy was making, and had not that enterprising individual gotten into touch with the Airways Weather Bureau and urged its personnel to do everything possible to insure Jimmy's safety, the tale would probably never have been known in the *Press* office. For Jimmy would doubtless have walked in and apologized for being delayed. He would probably have said that he had had engine trouble and had landed at Ringtown to

fix an oil pipe that was leaking. That would have been just like Jimmy. And no one would have known the difference.

But the managing editor, despite his accustomed gruffness and sharpness, was at heart the kindest of men. His harsh exterior was merely a mask he wore. He was fond of Jimmy. He had been truly worried about his flying reporter. He understood Jimmy well enough to know that the lad would make every effort humanly possible to get back with the photographs and the story.

Indeed, that was the real reason he liked Jimmy so much. Loyalty and enthusiasm counted greatly with the managing editor. And he knew that Jimmy was one hundred per cent. faithful. So he had taken the matter of Jimmy's flight in hand, and had done all he could to help his pilot get through. By telephone he had been kept informed of the lad's progress, and he had even been in conversation with the field worker at Ringtown. That was how he knew all about the matter. Ordinarily he had little to say to any one by way of commendation or praise. But this time he forgot his own rule of " not spoiling good

reporters by praising them." He had spoken from his heart.

There really wasn't much danger of the managing editor's spoiling Jimmy, or of anybody else's doing it, for that matter; because Jimmy was so intent on doing something, on accomplishing something, on getting ahead and climbing up, that he had little time to think about the things he had done. What interested Jimmy was the things he *hoped* to accomplish. He was always studying how to be a better flier and how to gain more ability in his new task as a newspaper man.

For a short time he had no assignments that taxed his abilities in either direction. He took the *Morning Press* camera man out to take pictures, on several occasions; he transported photographs himself; and he did one or two little tasks of reporting. But things moved so slowly for several days after the flight from Cleveland that time began to hang heavy on Jimmy's hands and he was growing restless for a task that seemed to him worth while.

It came, as most newspaper stories come, unexpectedly. Early one evening an A. P. " flash "

was received, saying that a great dam had burst in northeastern New Hampshire. A town had been partly wiped out by the wall of water that poured down the narrow valley. Scores were dead or missing. Hundreds were homeless. It was a disaster of the worst kind.

Managing Editor Johnson saw at once that this was no mere local story. This was a story of the widest interest. It was almost a "national" story. The destroyed town was far up in the northern part of the State, is a rough and rugged region. It would be utterly impossible to get one of his own men there in time to get a story for the next day's paper. He would have to depend upon local correspondents. Fortunately the *Press* had a correspondent at Berlin, which was not many miles distant from the wrecked village. Mr. Johnson ordered this correspondent to the scene at once, and made what arrangements he could with the telegraph company to expedite the handling of the despatches that might be filed. Then he called up Jimmy.

"We have just had a flash from the A. P.," he said, "about a dam that has burst north of

Berlin, New Hampshire, partly wiping out the town of Northend. It won't be possible for you to do anything to-night, I suppose, but I wish you would take off at daybreak and get up there as quick as you can. The place is in the very peak of the State. It's the northernmost town. We will get the general story through the A. P., and I have sent our Berlin correspondent. But we want a story by a staff member. Get all the incidents you can—the sort of stuff you and Handley gathered at Cleveland—and in particular get lots of pictures. We need the pictures especially. Get back here at the earliest moment you can."

"All right, Mr. Johnson," said Jimmy, "but I won't wait until morning. I'll take off at once. I can follow the New York to Boston lighted airway and stop at Springfield for the night. I know the way well. I could go all the way, but I don't know anything about the airports up in the White Mountains. I might have trouble in landing. So I'll stay at Springfield for the night and hop off from there at dawn. That will get me there early in the morning."

"Good," replied the managing editor. "That ought to get you back here by late afternoon. Good-bye and good luck to you."

Jimmy hopped off as soon as he could get ready. He was glad to be in the air again, happy to have a real task ahead of him. To be sure, there was nothing apparently difficult about this job. There was plenty of time, and the work ought to be easy. But Jimmy already knew enough about newspaper work to understand that one can never tell what will develop in any story. Before he got through with it, this assignment might bring him some thrilling experiences. At any rate, here was another chance to make good. This time he was wholly on his own.

Furthermore, the night was perfect. In flying language it was a "C. A. V. U." night—a night with ceiling and visibility unlimited. Not a cloud flecked the sky. The deep blue inverted bowl of the heavens seemed immeasurable. Myriads of stars hung in the firmament. So clear was the atmosphere that they made the night luminous. Indeed, the stars alone would have lighted the earth. But a glowing young moon added its

brilliant beams, making the night almost like day. It was an evening to gladden a pilot's heart.

It did gladden Jimmy's. He felt so gay and frolicsome that he could hardly refrain from doing a few barrel rolls, or looping the loop, or in some other way giving expression to his mood. But when he remembered that he was a fully accredited member of the staff of a great newspaper, and saw that it would not be seemly for a real reporter to be doing somersaults like a child, he restrained himself and flew along soberly enough. Yet his heart was singing gaily.

It was little more than nine o'clock when Jimmy hopped off from the Long Island airport. He had only a trifle more than 100 miles to go. He could make it easily in an hour, and in much less time if he chose to do so. But there was no call for haste, and Jimmy didn't want to get to Springfield too soon. He was enjoying the night and the ride altogether too much. So he flew along at a lazy gait.

He had crossed the upper part of New York City, so that he could fly over the East River rather than the Sound. And he had picked up

the line of beacons that marks the airway from Newark to Boston. Ahead of him he could see revolving beacon after beacon, at ten-mile intervals, as one sees street lamps stretching along a city boulevard. The way was as evident as Broadway at noon. But on a night like this Jimmy didn't need any lights on earth to guide him. The beacon lights in the heavens would have guided him anywhere.

It seemed to him that he reached Hartford, the capital city of Connecticut, in no time. Below him he could see the lights of the city, stretching in long rows for miles, like orchards of lights. Ever so plainly he could see the familiar landing field, where the pilots stop to pick up mail. It was all aglow, with its encircling white boundary lights, its green lights that show the descending pilot the best way of approach, its red markers on top of buildings and telephone poles, to tell the pilot where danger lurks aloft, and its clustered lights and beacons at the hangar. Jimmy had been there often and knew the place well.

From Hartford to Springfield was such a mere hop that Jimmy didn't want to stop when he

reached the latter city. If he could not play, at least he could express his feelings by extending this wonderful flight a trifle. He wondered where he should go. Then he thought of an old friend—a lad he had not seen for a long time—another member of the Wireless Patrol—Carl Dexter.

Jimmy had visited him once, after Carl moved away from Pennsylvania. He knew where Carl's home was. It was in the town of Wilbraham, in Massachusetts, only a few miles from Springfield. Of course, Jimmy had no hope of seeing Carl, but he thought he would fly over the lad's home and take a look at the region. He liked it greatly, and it held pleasant memories for him. If he could not see Carl he could at least drop him a note, saying that he had passed in the night. Perhaps Carl might even see his plane and remember about the incident. He would circle around the place and perhaps the family might notice his plane. So, instead of landing at Springfield, Jimmy remained in the air.

He flew lazily over the city, to take a look at it by moonlight. He could see everything plainly.

There was the peaceful Connecticut River, asleep under the rays of the moon, and the brightly lighted memorial bridge that crossed it. At a distance rose the high tower he had had in mind as a guiding light, with its great lamp glowing aloft. And only a few miles distant, shining almost level with his eyes, was the flashing beacon on Mt. Tom. It was all familiar to Jimmy. He was glad to see it again.

When he had flown over the city, he banked sharply to the right and turned to the east, trying to pick out the clustered lights of the village of Wilbraham, which was less than nine miles distant. In five minutes he was over the place. Just beyond, he could plainly see the bulk of Springfield Mountain. It lay dead ahead of him. At the foot of it he saw a long line of lights that marked the country highway. Here and there shone the lamps of snug little homes. On the slope of the mountain scattered lights betrayed the presence of other country dwellings. If he kept straight on, Jimmy would have to fly right over the mountain. But just now he had no intention whatever of attempting to fly over the

mountain. He kicked his rudder and shoved his stick over until he was flying parallel with the ridge. Then cautiously he began to descend. He was trying to find the house in which his friend lived. It was on the slope of the mountain, perhaps a mile or two from the village. Jimmy recalled that fact distinctly.

He dropped down as low as he dared. He was within four hundred feet of the ground. He could see every feature of the landscape sharply in the bright moonlight. But it was a little difficult to pick out one particular house, when he had visited the neighborhood only once and had never seen the region from the air. So he had to swing about in a great circle. That took him a little closer to the mountain than he had intended to fly. But the air was calm and he did not anticipate any danger.

Now, as he circled close to the slope of the hill, he saw, here and there, little homes tucked away in little farms on the wooded side of the mountain. The moonlight glistening on the dewy roofs made them shine out startlingly.

But suddenly he saw something that made him

catch his breath. From a window of one of these hillside homes flames were licking upward. At first Jimmy doubted his own eyes. But a second glance told him he was not mistaken. The flames grew swiftly in intensity, and leaping tongues of fire were soon shooting from several windows. Even from his position high in the air Jimmy could see that the fire was in the first floor of the building. The flames were now lighting the place up brightly.

Jimmy came down a little lower and circled above the house. Nowhere could he see a sign of life. He glanced at his clock. It was almost ten-thirty. "All abed and sound asleep," muttered Jimmy. "They'll all be roasted sure if some one doesn't waken them."

He circled lower. Nowhere could he see a soul. Yet the place had the appearance of being inhabited. Close by, in the barnyard, Jimmy saw cattle. Then he *knew* the place was occupied. Now he saw a dog running about excitedly. Meantime, the flames grew brighter and brighter. The first floor windows were fairly belching smoke and flames.

Something must be done to save the family so sound asleep in this isolated home. For a second Jimmy glanced about to see if there was a field handy where he could land. It was some distance to the nearest one. Whatever was to be done must be done instantly. There was no time to hunt out a landing place.

Without a moment's hesitation Jimmy circled back toward the house. He shoved his stick over and nosed his plane downward. Then he gave her the gun. The ship shot earthward like a meteor. She gained tremendous speed. Jimmy flew her straight at the blazing house. When he was so close it seemed as though he could not possibly avoid crashing into the structure, he pulled back on his stick and zoomed up over the housetop, his engine beating with a thunderous roar.

Swiftly he circled and bore back toward the doomed habitation. Again he dived at it, like a hawk after a pigeon, and again he zoomed up over the housetop. His engine, racing at full speed, set the mountain to echoing with mighty reverberations. The dog, the poultry, everything that

could make a noise was adding to the uproar, so terrified were they.

Now Jimmy came close to the house and on level keel circled as close to it as he could. All the while his engine was thundering at high speed. Round and round he circled, watching the place closely, hoping that he would accomplish his purpose before it was too late.

At last he saw a head poked from a window. Another followed. The family was at last awake. Jimmy drew a breath of relief and instantly lifted his plane to a higher altitude. He had gotten dangerously close to the tree tops.

There was nothing more he could do in his plane. He wanted to help these unfortunate folks. Perhaps the barn and the live stock could be saved, even if the dwelling was doomed. But Jimmy could give no assistance in a plane. He must get to the ground.

He flew out toward the open farm land. There were fields everywhere. Most of them were too little for his purpose. But not far away he saw a field that seemed to stretch for hundreds of yards along the roadway, which here parallels the

mountain. Jimmy could see it plainly in the moonlight. It looked smooth and safe. Jimmy judged it was a mowing, or hayfield. He swooped toward it. At the far end of the field he could dimly discern on a little ridge of land a great barn with a huge silo. A low white dwelling rose between it and the road. The sight reassured him. The field *must* be a smooth mowing. He felt certain now that he could land in safety. He circled, so as to approach the field again from the lower end, dropped a flare, switched on his landing lights, and came down sharply over the trees that lined the end of the field. He could see well. He noticed that the field sloped upward slightly toward the distant house and barn. Bringing his plane down almost to the earth, he straightened her out, and just as his wheels were about to touch the ground lifted her nose a trifle. A second later he set her down perfectly, shut off his gas, and let the ship roll up the little slope to a standstill.

Jimmy was out of the ship and out of his parachute like a flash. But already near-by dwellers were collecting around his plane.

"There's a house on fire on the mountain," cried Jimmy. "Everybody in it was sound asleep until I woke them a moment ago. They need help. They may be burning to death. Come on. Who knows the way?"

"This way," shouted a lad who had just come up. "Follow me."

The entire group raced after him, as he ran down the highway, then turned into a wood road that led directly up the slope of the mountain.

Now it was plain enough that something was burning. Through the trees shone a red glare, and the sky above was rosy with the flames. Showers of sparks could be seen shooting skyward. The wood road appeared to lead directly toward the burning house, which was located at no great distance from the main highway.

Up the road they raced as fast as they could travel. The entire countryside seemed to be lighted by the fire. In no time they reached the burning building. The first floor was a mass of flames, and the fire was rapidly eating its way to the roof. The owner had escaped, with his wife and two children; but a grown lad, who

slept on the third floor, was trapped and could be seen leaning from an attic window. The father was trying to rescue him.

He had gotten a ladder, but it was many feet too short. There was no apparent way to reach the lad. The father was part way up the ladder. He was calling to the boy to jump into his arms.

"Wait!" cried Jimmy, as he rushed up. "Don't do that. You'll both be hurt. There must be some other way." His mind was working fast. An idea came to him. "Have you a rope?" he demanded.

"Sure. A long hay rope."

"Let me have it quick," said Jimmy. "We can save him with that."

The rope was fetched. From his pocket Jimmy took a ball of twine he had been using back at his hangar. The twine was thin but strong. He picked up a long, thin stone, tied one end of the twine to it, called to the lad in the window to catch it, and threw the stone up to him. The first attempt failed. Jimmy threw the stone up again and the lad caught it. Jimmy tied the twine to the hay rope. Fearful lest the

heavy rope break the twine, he mounted the ladder almost to its topmost rung, gathered up a great length of the rope to take the weight from the twine, and held the rope up toward the lad above him.

"Pull it up carefully, but hurry," he said. "It's hot on this ladder."

Quickly the lad hauled up the twine, then carefully raised the rope until he could clutch the end of it. A cry of relief went up from the watching crowd as he grasped the rope. The lad disappeared within the attic, dragging the rope behind him. In a moment he reappeared at the window, slid out over the sill, and on down to the ladder. He had fastened the rope within the attic. Jimmy tarried on the ladder until the lad's feet were firmly planted on a rung. Then he scrambled to earth, quickly followed by the lad he had rescued.

Once they were on the ground, the lad turned to Jimmy and held out his hand. Both boys gave a cry of astonishment. The lad who had just slid down the rope was Carl Dexter, Jimmy's old friend in the Wireless Patrol. They grasped

hands eagerly and greeted one another in a manner that astonished the crowd.

"Carl!" cried Jimmy. "I had no idea that was you. The light was so flickering and uncertain, and your hair is rumpled and I just didn't recognize you. I didn't know your father, either, but that is not strange. He has grown a beard since I saw him. I suppose I have grown so in the years since we met that he didn't know me either. I'm awfully glad to see you. It has been more than two years since we met."

"No more than I am to see you, Jimmy. But it's terrible to see you under these circumstances. How did you get here? What brought you here?"

"I'll tell you all about that later," said Jimmy. "We've got to try to save the barn just now. The house will go sure."

They ran to the endangered structure and found most of the neighbors battling hard to protect it. A bucket brigade had been formed. Water was being thrown on roof and wall. The dwelling was absolutely doomed. In the end, after a hard battle, the firemen succeeded in sav-

ing the barn, some other outbuildings, and all the stock and implements.

When a lull came in the fire fighting, Jimmy and his old friend drew off to one side, and Jimmy began to tell Carl how he happened to be flying in the neighborhood and how he discovered the fire. Suddenly he stopped talking and a strange look came into his face. He seemed to be debating something in his mind.

"Carl," he said, "I'm in a queer position. I have no business to be here at all. I ought to be in Springfield. My managing editor thinks I am there. Gee! He might even have been trying to get me. He may have some orders for me. I never thought of that. I could slip right back there and maybe he'd never know the difference. But here's a story. It's a good story, even if I did have a part in it. The *Press* ought to have it. Maybe we can scoop the other New York papers on it. I'm going to shoot it in as quick as I can, no matter what the Old Man says about my taking too much rope. He can fire me if he wants to. But I'm not going to see the *Press* beaten on its own story. Gee!

He'd fire me for that, sure. How can I get to a telegraph office quickest?"

"In a motor car, I should think. Thank heaven the barn didn't burn. Our car is in it. I'll pull on some trousers and —— By Jove! I don't own any trousers. They are all burned up. I'll go as I am. And I'll get you to the telegraph office as fast as gasoline will take us."

He did. Jimmy ran into the office and began to write. He handed the sheets to the operator as fast as they were written, with the injunction to rush the stuff. The operator ticked off the story as Jimmy wrote.

Because he was full of the matter, and because he could see so vividly in his mind the scene he was describing, Jimmy once more wrote a gripping story. He told in simple words how the pilot of the *Morning Press* plane, flying over Wilbraham, had noticed flames issuing from a hillside home; how the pilot had awakened the sleeping inmates by diving at the house with roaring motor; how later the pilot and a farm boy had saved the life of a lad trapped in the third floor of the burning building; and how this

rescued youth had proved to be a lifelong friend of the pilot.

" Gee," said Jimmy, when he had finished the story, " I slipped up there. I forgot to get the name of that farm boy. I'll let it go now, but I'll be more careful next time."

Then he wrote another message. It was to the managing editor.

At once the managing editor got into touch with him by telephone.

" We have further news about the New Hampshire flood," he said. " It's even bigger than I thought. I'm sorry I didn't send another man with you."

" I've got a friend here," answered Jimmy, " who could help me if you are willing. It's the lad we just saved from the fire. He's an old friend. I can make good use of him. Shall I take him? "

" Get anybody you can who can help you," was the answer.

Jimmy called out to Carl: " Could you go on up to New Hampshire with me and help me cover a flood story? "

"If they can spare me at home, I'll go gladly if it will help you any."

Jimmy turned back to the telephone. "I think it is all right, Mr. Johnson," he said.

"Very well. Make all the speed you can. This is a big story and all the papers will be after it hot. Use the telegraph or the telephone if you break down. Make sure that we get the story and get it in pleny of time. And don't forget that we want good pictures. They are more important than the story. We'll get a story from the A. P., anyway. The telegraph editor tells me you just sent in a rattling good story about a fire. Keep it up. Get us an even better one about the flood. Good-bye."

CHAPTER IX

Covering a Great Flood by Airplane

WHEN Jimmy explained to Mr. Dexter that he needed help the next day and had asked Carl to assist him, Mr. Dexter reluctantly consented for Carl to go with him. Carl was really needed at home in this emergency, for there would be much to do. But Mr. Dexter was so grateful to Jimmy for saving his son's life, and for perhaps saving all their lives, that he did not feel as though he could refuse the request. So it was settled that Carl and Jimmy should take off at dawn the next morning.

Neighbors lent the lad some shoes and clothes. And though these did not look very well, they answered the purpose all right. The question of shelter for the night was solved with equal ease. Neighbors took the homeless family into their own homes. Jimmy wanted to be near his plane.

The lad who had guided Jimmy from his plane to the burning home said that his grandfather lived in the white house by the mowing where the plane was standing, and would be glad to take the two fliers in for the night. So Jimmy and Carl found themselves housed for the night in a very comfortable home, close by the airplane. They were assured that no one would molest the ship, for the big farm dog would drive off all intruders.

Relieved in his mind, Jimmy prepared to get some sleep, in preparation for the hard day he foresaw for the morrow. But before he went to bed, he got out his maps and studied the topography of the region over which he had to fly the next day. Northend, the town that had been wiped out by the flood, was some miles north of Berlin. It was at the lower end of a little valley, which was almost entirely surrounded by mountains. The Androscoggin River flowed through the little city.

"It's plain enough what has happened," said Jimmy to Carl. "There must have been a dam up the river and it gave way. There was no place for the wall of water to go but straight

through the heart of Northend. These two mountains at the southern end of the town are like the shoulders of a bottle. There's only a narrow neck between them, for the water to pass through. If this jammed up with débris, the whole town would be under water."

They studied the map in silence for a few moments. "Gee!" said Carl. "There's plenty of mountains up there. How are you going to get there?"

"We'll fly directly up the Connecticut River, between Vermont and New Hampshire, until we pass South Columbia. Then we'll fly east past the mountains until we strike the Androscoggin. We'll follow that stream south to Northend. What we'll do for a landing-place I don't know. The map doesn't look very promising. But I suspect we can pick out some place that will answer. Anyway, we'll cross that bridge when we get to it. But you can remember to watch for possible landing-places after we leave the Connecticut to-morrow. That's a rough country up there in northern New Hampshire."

Their thoughtful hosts looked after the lads'

every need, even to lending them an alarm clock. Soon the boys were sound asleep in a bed as soft as down. It had been an exciting day for both of them, and each was ready for slumber.

When the alarm rang, Jimmy sat up in bed indignantly. "Confound that thing!" he said. "Something's wrong with it. We haven't been abed ten minutes."

But his watch showed him that the only thing wrong was his own sense of time. It was almost dawn. The boys arose instantly and dressed quietly, so as not to disturb their hosts. They tiptoed down-stairs, their shoes in their hands. But when they reached the kitchen there was a surprise in store for them. Their hostess was not only up and dressed, but a substantial breakfast awaited them. Jimmy hardly knew what to say or how to thank her. She told him the best thanks would be for the two boys to eat a good breakfast. In that way they thanked her heartily enough. Then, bidding their kind hosts good-bye, the two lads hastened to the plane, started the engine, and soon hopped off.

Straight to Springfield they flew, and there

Jimmy landed and had his supply of gasoline and oil replenished. Then they took off for the north, sailing straight up the valley of the Connecticut.

On another occasion Jimmy would have been glad to fly leisurely along this beautiful river and enjoy the fine scenery. But to-day he had no time for anything but his job. Well he knew that hard on his heels would come rushing a whole company of newspaper men, if indeed some of them had not even preceded him in the dark. His job was to get to Northend as quickly as he could, and collect the material he needed. An hour's start, he knew well, would make all the difference in the world to him. So he opened his throttle and pushed his ship along at a fast pace.

He had considerably more than 200 miles to go, for he was playing safe by doubling around the mountains instead of flying directly over them. But in considerably less than two hours he had covered the route selected and was flying south along the Androscoggin, close to Northend. So far he had not seen a plane anywhere, and he believed he was the first news flier to reach the scene.

As he came south along the little river, the land began to rise in swelling heights to right and left, and the level bottom-land became narrower and narrower. Presently the *Morning Press* fliers found themselves almost surrounded by mountains. It was like flying through a break in the side of a bowl into the bowl itself. Ahead of them, behind them, and to right and left of them, mountains rose, steep, rugged, and menacing. And in the very centre of this bowl-like valley lay Northend.

At the present moment the valley was in very truth a bowl, for it was fairly covered with water. From mountain to mountain the water reached, and what had been the city of Northend looked like a collection of tiny islets in the centre of the vast lake. Individual houses and blocks of buildings lifted their dark roofs above the turbid waters.

"Makes you think of huckleberries floating in a bowl of milk," Carl shouted to Jimmy.

And that was what the scene did resemble. The huckleberries, of course, were houses. In the centre of the town the buildings rose in solid

blocks, like squares of brown bread that had gotten in with the huckleberries. But in the residential districts the houses stood apart, well separated, and on the very outskirts of the town they were farther and farther apart. Isolated homes rose from the flood out in what must have been the suburban or rural regions. Nowhere within the limits of the city was there a foot of dry ground visible.

" It's terrible," shouted Jimmy. Carl nodded his head.

Jimmy made a complete circle around the little valley, at a good elevation. From that height he and Carl could see everything. Their vision ranged from mountain to mountain, unobstructed. Nowhere was there another plane. Nowhere was there evidence of activity, save in one or two places where small boats were being navigated from house to house. Jimmy was thrilled at the thought that he was the first outside correspondent actually to reach the scene. He resolved that he would also be the first to take to the outer world an eye-witness story of the disaster. He knew he must work fast to do it.

Other newspaper men would soon be on his heels. They would be coming in droves.

"Get my camera," he shouted to Carl, "and take a snap or two of the scene. Get a picture that shows the whole valley under water, with Northend in the centre of it."

Carl could handle a camera, and leaning through an open window, he got several good pictures. The rising sun was shining down into the valley by this time, illuminating it well.

Now Jimmy brought his ship down in an easy glide until he was not more than 200 feet above the flood. He flew back and forth over the town. Carl snapped pictures as they flew and Jimmy watched every feature of the scene before him. Now he could see many people looking out of the upper floors of their homes. He could trace the course of the river by the line of débris and wreckage. For the flood had gone tearing through the city, wrecking, smashing, demolishing everything in its pathway. Before it had been swept a vast mass of material, consisting of outbuildings, uprooted trees, broken telephone poles, railroad ties, old boats, wooden bridges,

sawlogs, pulp timber, porches, fences, boardwalks, demolished homes, and a thousand other objects that the rushing waters had wrenched loose or broken down or torn up. And all this mass of débris, jamming at the bottle neck, had backed the water up and submerged the town. Jimmy had read his map aright.

As he flew, Jimmy made mental note of striking things he saw. Here was a house tilting at an unbelievable angle, its underpinning evidently washed away. Here were motor cars standing on their roofs, only their four wheels showing above the flood. Here were the remains of an iron bridge, that must have weighed scores of tons. Yet the iron work was rolled into a great mass, like a ball of rope, and the whole thing rested on a smashed front porch of a home. The entire front of the house was caved in by the force of the blow struck by the iron. Here were railroad cars turned upside down.

Through the centre of the town was a wide gap between rows of buildings. At first Jimmy did not catch the significance of this. He thought it was the river bed. Then something reminded

him of the stream as he had seen it a few miles above Northend. There it was only a little river, a few rods wide. This breach in the centre of the town was of vast width. Suddenly Jimmy understood. Whole blocks of houses had been washed away. They must be jammed up with the other débris at the bottle neck below. He shuddered at the thought. The loss of life must have been appalling.

Along either side of this wide pathway of death, the flood waters had left their marks. Débris of every conceivable sort had been washed up on either side of the furrow the flood had plowed through the town, and there a million odd things had lodged. Old boxes, chicken-coops, boards, timbers, door-steps, wooden gates, tin cans, and a multitude of other things had been forced in between houses or up on porches, or through first floor windows, until the scene was terrible beyond description. It was plain enough where the wall of water from the broken dam had gone surging through the town. Like a giant among pigmies, it had mowed down everything in its path.

Back and forth Jimmy flew over the distressed city. On the flat tops of business buildings he saw many people. The upper floors of buildings seemed to teem with people. On the hills opposite the town he now saw figures moving. He judged they were people who had reached the heights before the flood overwhelmed the city, or else they were folks from the neighborhood who had come to the assistance of the marooned townspeople. Long ago, all those who could be rescued had been rescued, or had gone to their deaths. How many of them there were and who they were Jimmy could not even guess. But he knew the total must be terrible. He could not help to save anybody, but he could get into touch with the survivors and get the story of the disaster. He began to look about for some means of accomplishing this end.

Near the centre of the town was a building that stood up one or two stories higher than any other structure in the city. It was a great squarish building, that looked as firm as Gibraltar. Jimmy had noticed it as soon as he reached the town. He couldn't help noticing it. And he

also saw that there were people on the flat roof. Now he flew toward this building, dropping as low as he dared to come. Suddenly his eye shone with pleasure. On the front of the structure he caught sight of a large sign, with the gilded name "Northend *Daily News.*" He glanced at the group of people on the roof. He was so close to them that he could almost tell the color of their eyes. To his astonishment he saw that a desk had been carried to the roof, together with many chairs, and that a man was seated at the desk, busily typewriting.

The sight stirred Jimmy's heart. "It's the editor of the Northend *News* writing the story of the flood. I'll bet a dollar it is," thought Jimmy. "If only I can get that story, the *Morning Press* will have the biggest scoop in years."

He pulled out a pad and scribbled on it as he flew: "Have you the story of the flood? Can I get it from you? I am from the New York *Press.*" Then he turned to Carl. "In my tool kit you'll find a large spool of safety wire," he said. "Get that out, put a weight on it, and tie this note to it."

Carl fished out the wire, weighted one end of it with a monkey-wrench, and tied the note to it. Then Jimmy headed directly into the stiff breeze which was coming up, and when they neared the building again throttled his engine down until the ship seemed hardly to have any forward motion. Carl, meantime, had paid out the wire. Several men on the roof grabbed for the message, but all missed it. Jimmy made a circle and once more flew over the roof. This time some one caught the note.

Jimmy circled the town and flew back over the *News* building. Now he saw white marks on the roof. Some one had been making great letters with a piece of chalk. They were a message for him. This is what they said. "Have entire story. Press room flooded. Have made mats. Can you take to Berlin and arrange to have edition printed and sent here? A truck can reach west side of town by the hill road."

When Jimmy read that he couldn't suppress a whoop. "Carl," he cried. "Just think! He's got the story set up and the mats made for casting the stereotype plates. If we can get those

mats, we can get proofs of the whole story. It'll be the beat of the year."

He scribbled another note. "Will land and try to reach you. Have everything ready. Will fly to Berlin with the mats and make arrangements for edition for you." The next time he flew over the *News* building, this message was skilfully dropped by Carl and caught by the group on the roof.

"They got it," shouted Carl.

Jimmy smiled and nodded. Then he pulled back on his stick, lifted his plane to a higher elevation, and went soaring straight toward the nearest hillside, looking for a possible landing-place.

On a hillside farm he found a place that looked favorable. Twice he flew over the place studying it. The ground seemed rough. He was fearful of it. But he saw no better place and decided to chance it. He came down in a long glide, barely missing some trees. Then he straightened out for a landing. His plane was just skimming the ground, and Jimmy was waiting for it to lose flying speed when he noticed a

low stone wall at the other end of the field. Jimmy knew he was overshooting too much to dare attempt to kill his surplus speed by fish-tailing. He burst the gun wide open and eased back on the stick. In a second the ship was once more over the tree tops, and Jimmy circled back again into the wind for another try at the field. He did a nose high slip and then proceeded in disgust to pancake her in. It was a dangerous move, even for the most skilled pilot, for always there is danger of falling off on one wing, due to a lack of flying speed. The ship was settling vertically. Just before she hit, Jimmy burst the gun half open to give her a little more forward speed, so she would not settle so hard on her undercarriage. Then she struck, but not hard enough to break anything. Rapidly she came to rest. With a sigh of relief he throttled down his engine and climbed from the plane. He let his motor idle for a few minutes, then cut the switch.

"We'll go over to those folks yonder and talk to them," he said, starting toward a group of people who were doing something at a distance.

They hurried to the workers. A number of

people who lived on the hills were busy making rafts at the water's edge, to rescue the marooned; for there were many folks in the flooded area whose position was still precarious. Jimmy talked to the workers. They told him the story of the breaking of the dam. This was a huge reservoir in the hills, only a short distance above the city. Continuous rains to the north had swollen every brook and rivulet until the impounded water had reached a threatening height. There was anxiety about the dam, but no actual fear of its breaking. Then suddenly, without warning, the dam had slid from its foundations, releasing the entire body of water at once. That was what made the catastrophe so awful.

A wall of water thirty feet high had swept down the valley. Naturally it followed the trough of the Androscoggin. That stream, already bank full, could not hold another drop. The result was appalling. Straight through the town the huge wall of water had gone, thundering and destroying, smashing and devastating, sweeping away houses as though they had been chips. Whole blocks of buildings, on either bank of the stream,

had been picked up and swept down-stream. Jimmy's guess was correct.

Scores had been killed or were missing. Had the disaster occurred in the daytime, it might have been possible to save many of them. But coming as it did, just at nightfall, the flood had done its worst. To venture out into the roaring waters in the dark was sheer suicide. There had been some rescues. They told Jimmy about those they knew of. There had been many deeds of daring. Jimmy learned the stories. Now a great effort was being made to save those who were still in danger. For the waters were yet deep and the current swift. Indeed, in the centre of the town the water was still eight feet deep and sweeping along swiftly, cutting away ground, undermining houses, uprooting poles, and spreading destruction. The work of rescue had been made difficult through the loss of boats. Most of the boats in the town had been swept away in the first fierce rush of water.

There was one little boat at hand. It was a rickety, sorry-looking craft, and it evidently leaked badly. But still it was a boat. Jimmy

looked at it. He decided that it would hold together for a few hours longer.

"Who owns this boat?" he inquired.

"I do," said a farmer. "But it ain't much of a boat. I caught it in the flood last night."

"I'll give you five dollars for it for one hour," said Jimmy.

"You can have it," said the farmer, "but I warn you it ain't safe to get in it. We tried it and had to come back. The thing almost sunk with us."

"We'll try it," said Jimmy. "Got something we can bail with?"

The farmer got them an old pail. There were oars in the boat. Jimmy got two strong poles from a pile of wood that lay near.

"Come on, Carl," he said, stepping toward the craft. "Let's empty her."

They drew the boat ashore and turned it on its side. When the water had run out, they pushed the craft into the flood, stepped carefully into it, and shoved off. The farmer's description had not been exaggerated. Water began to seep into the boat rapidly.

"Take the oars and row as hard as you can, Carl," said Jimmy. "I'll bail and tell you how to pull."

Carl began to row rapidly, and Jimmy started to throw out the water. By bailing vigorously he could just about keep up with it. They made good progress until they came to the built up part of the town. Here the water rushing between the houses caused eddies and delaying currents. But they kept on steadily, Jimmy telling Carl which way to pull, while he himself tossed out bucket after bucket of water. Without the bucket they would have sunk in a short time.

They drove straight out toward the street on which the *News* building stood. There they turned and floated straight down the street with the current. The waters were still tearing along beween the houses at a terrifying rate. It was appalling to think what it must have been like when the flood was at its crest. There was little to do now except bail and steer. There was still plenty of drifting débris in the water, and this made it dangerous. Always there was the chance that some half sunken log, swirling up beneath

them, would overturn their boat and catapult them into the flood.

They drew near the *News* building. "We've got to be sure we make it," said Jimmy. "If we are carried past, it will be a deuce of a job getting back. Get your rope in hand. Put your oars in the boat. I'll steer her with a pole. Grab a window-frame. I'll knock out the glass if necessary."

They drew swiftly near the *News* building. It had suffered, like every other building in town. The water was up to the second story. Apparently it was going to be difficult to make a landing.

"Get ready now," cautioned Jimmy. "If we miss her, I'll try to shoot the boat around the corner of the building. There'll be an eddy there. Grab anything you can catch hold of, and hold fast to your rope."

Jimmy forced the boat toward a second-story window. The window was closed. It looked as though they would have a hard time to make an entrance. Jimmy raised his pole to smash the glass. He was just about to strike, when the sash

was flung up and a man's head thrust through the window.

"Give me your rope, quick," said the man.

Carl thrust out his hand with the rope. The man took the rope and carefully snubbed the boat. "Look out," he cried. "Watch that you don't get thrown out."

The boat swung round in the current and came to rest alongside the building. Jimmy and Carl climbed carefully through the window, helped by the man within.

"We are the fliers who dropped you the message," said Jimmy. "We've come for the mats."

"Good," said the man. "Come up on the roof and talk to the boss."

They ran up the steps to the roof. There sat the man Jimmy had seen at the desk. He was still typewriting. Jimmy made himself known.

"I'm from the New York *Morning Press*," he said. "Tell me about the flood, and about your own situation and what you want me to do."

"No use to tell you anything," said the editor. "Every word I know about the flood is already in type. You can have complete proofs of it if

you will take my mats to the office of the Berlin newspaper and get them to print the edition. I want 5,000 copies. They can send them back here by truck or any way they wish, but I must have them at the first possible moment. We'll establish headquarters over on the shore, near the place from which you started. We've been watching every move you made. That's near the highway that skirts the west side of the valley. Tell them to send their papers there just as quick as they can get them printed. By that time the water will have gone down some and maybe altogether. They are making arrangements to dynamite the jam at the gorge below town. That will let the water drain out."

Meantime, a printer had been wrapping the mats up carefully in oiled paper. Another man had attached a long rope to Jimmy's boat and had worked the boat around into the eddy at the down-stream side of the building. Still another printer came to the roof with duplicate sets of proofs for Jimmy.

The latter assured the *News* editor that he would not fail to carry out his commission. "I

ask just one thing," he said. "Give me an assurance that I have a start over the next reporter."

"I'll do that," said the editor. "I can't hold out any news, if any reporter questions me, but I'll give out no more proofs. That's only fair. It's in return for your help. Now you'll have to be hurrying, for there comes your first competitor."

Jimmy whirled and looked upward. Sure enough, there was another plane coming down the valley.

Jimmy delayed only long enough to talk to some of the men on the roof. He soon found they knew little except the general story of the flood. They were all employees of the *News*. All had been at work in the building when the flood overwhelmed the town on the previous evening. They had remained there because they believed they were safe in the big steel and stone structure. But reporters had managed to get abroad, and before the telephone lines were all down they had telephoned in dozens of stories about the flood. Later some of them had made their way back to the *News* building in a boat, with detailed

stories of rescues, deaths and drownings, heroic acts, and the names of the flood victims whose bodies had been recovered and identified. And now Jimmy had proofs of all their stories, together with all the tales he and Carl had picked up, and their photographs and mental pictures of what was left of Northend.

No wonder Jimmy wanted to be off with this treasure trove, when he saw a competitor winging toward the town. Bidding farewell to the *News* editor, Jimmy and Carl carefully entered their boat, bailed it, and shoved off. The trip back was even harder than the journey out to the *News* building, for now Jimmy had a great roll of mats to keep dry. He was forced to bail with one hand. It was difficult work to keep up with the incoming water, but he toiled like a Trojan and almost kept up. By the time they reached the shore there must have been two inches of water in the boat, but that meant nothing to either lad.

Jimmy paid the farmer for the use of his boat. He delayed a little to ask further questions about the flood, and picked up additional incidents; for

several people had joined the rescue group while he and Carl were gone. Just as Jimmy was starting for his ship, he saw that the other airplane was landing close to where his own ship stood. He delayed to see who the newcomer was. He was sorry enough he had waited, when the latter stepped from his plane. It was Rand, a man who formerly worked for the *Morning Press,* and who had been discharged by Mr. Johnson because he utterly failed to solve the problem of the air mail bandits, whereas Jimmy had uncovered the whole story.

Even before that event occurred, Rand had disliked Jimmy. But since Rand had been discharged by the *Morning Press* he had hated Jimmy with malignant intensity. He had done everything he could, at every turn, to trick and discredit him. And Jimmy knew well that the fellow would hardly stop at anything to accomplish his purpose. Now Jimmy walked briskly by him, merely nodding. But Rand answered the nod with a cutting oath.

In a few minutes Jimmy and Carl hopped off for Berlin. Almost straight south they flew, with

the Milan Hills on their right and the Chickwolrepy Mountain on their left. It was no distance at all to Berlin. At least, it took almost no time at all to reach that city. But Jimmy had to circle several times before he was willing to land. Even then he was fearful of the result. For the only place that looked possible was the flat land along the river, and this had been under water. Even yet there were little pools here and there in the depressions. Jimmy was afraid his plane might bog down and nose over. If it did, that was the end of his flight—the flight that promised so much for him.

For a moment he was tempted to go on, and mail the mats back from the next town. But he had promised to put them in the hands of the Berlin editor. Jimmy always tried to make his word as good as his bond. So now, after studying the ground carefully, he picked out the most promising looking spot and came down in a long glide. Just as his ship was about to hit the ground, he gave her the gun for a second, to increase her momentum, set her down on three points, and held his breath. The field was not as

wet as it looked, and the mud was only surface mud. His ship rolled safely to a stop.

Jimmy was out of her in a flash. Throwing off his parachute, and leaving Carl to guard the plane, he hurried off with his mats. In no time he found the editor of the Berlin paper, delivered the mats and the message, and was back at his ship. But on the way he had stopped at a garage to engage some gasoline. Soon a tank wagon rolled up, and Jimmy's tanks were quickly filled. Then, waving good-bye to the circle of admiring small boys, Jimmy hopped off.

A great, bald-faced, precipitous hill rose to the west of the town. Jimmy circled over the city, to gain altitude. Below him he noticed the great pulp mill and the enormous pile of pulp wood, that rose like a little mountain close beside the river. The whole atmosphere was redolent of the sulphur used in making paper.

But Jimmy had little interest now in sightseeing. The instant he had gained sufficient altitude, he darted away to the west, shot between the hills, and sped straight as an arrow to Lancaster, the nearest town on the Connecticut.

Then he banked to the left and with throttle opened wide went roaring down the valley of that river, over the same route by which he had come. He dropped Carl at Springfield, after getting his promise that when things were straightened out at home Carl would come to New York to visit him.

Again he took off, and this time he did not come to earth again until he landed at his home field. A taxi once more took him to the *Press* office, where he delivered his news proofs and films to the city editor, then sat down and for a long time worked industriously at his typewriter, putting down on paper the description of what he had seen and learned at Northend.

His trip back to Long Island was a pleasant one. Again he had been equal to the occasion. Once more he had made good. But there was one memory of his recent trip that left a bad taste in his mouth. That was the thought of Rand. On several occasions now he had gotten the better of the fellow. Each time Jimmy had triumphed over him, Rand had made his hatred more evident, had tried meaner tricks to thwart Jimmy.

But never before had Rand cursed him at sight or seemed so venomously hostile.

"I'll have to watch him carefully," thought Jimmy. "He is vicious enough to do most anything." And Jimmy was right, as coming events were to prove.

CHAPTER X

Jimmy Visits a Lightship Off the Coast

FOR some time after his flight to Northend Jimmy found life rather tame. No really big stories happened in the eastern part of the country. So Jimmy was occupied from day to day with minor tasks that provided little excitement. Yet all the while he was learning more about his job. From day to day he talked with fellow pilots at the Long Island airport, and drew from them as much as he could in the way of helpful suggestions about flying. For some of them had had extremely trying experiences. Whenever he was with newspaper men Jimmy asked as many questions as he could about reporting and news coverage. He bore in mind what the managing editor had said to him: "If you continue to improve, you'll make a great reporter some day." It was Jimmy's ambition to be one

of the very best. So he welcomed every experience that added to his knowledge.

Even when his work seemed tamest he was acquiring facts and knowledge with surprising rapidity; and all that he learned enlarged his background and was just so much preparation for the day when he should truly become a great reporter. One of his assignments was to fly out to an incoming steamer in a seaplane and bring ashore some important news photographs from Europe. It was on this flight that Jimmy had his first sight of a lightship anchored at sea. He was instructed to meet the incoming ship near the Ambrose lightship, off the entrance to the Ambrose Channel that leads from the deep water of the sea up to the New York harbor.

Jimmy knew the approximate hour of the steamship's arrival at that point. He flew out to sea a little early, to be certain that he was on time. He was to get the pictures when the ship slowed down to pick up the pilot who was to guide her up the channel to her dock. Arrangements had been made by wireless with the photographer, who was aboard the liner. He was

to get the pictures down to Jimmy in the sea-plane.

When the latter reached the lightship, the ocean liner was not yet in sight. Jimmy decided that he would not fly out to sea to meet her. He was a little distrustful of all this vast stretch of water about him. He had been ordered to meet the ship when she picked up her pilot. The pilot boat was cruising not far away. Jimmy decided that he would come down on the water, which was very calm, and take a look at the light-ship. So he flew close to the vessel, then came down in a long glide, and was soon bobbing safely on the gentle swells of the Atlantic.

The lightship was only a few hundred feet distant. Jimmy turned the nose of his plane toward the vessel and taxied to a point close to leeward of it. He had never seen such a curious craft. It was a clumsy, bunty sort of ship, apparently not more than a hundred feet long, with bulging, bulky bow, like that of a Dutch canal-boat. The sides of the vessel were very high for a ship of her length. The ship was a straw color; and painted on her hull in huge letters was the word

Ambrose. She had two masts, and at the top of each mast was apparently a guide light, protected by a circular black iron grating, to flash out warning signals in the dark.

Jimmy taxied as close to the ship as he dared. The crew of ten or a dozen men was lined up along the leeward rail, watching him. Apparently the men thought he wished to board the ship, for one of them had a light line in his hand. Seeing that, Jimmy decided he would go aboard. He scanned the sea and saw no sign of an approaching liner. Then he forced his plane a very little closer to the lightship and waited. At once the man with the coil of rope drew back his arm and flung the line straight toward Jimmy. It sped through the air, uncoiling as it flew, and dropped lightly on the fuselage of the plane. Jimmy stepped out on a wing and secured the line. In another moment he had been drawn close up to the ship. A port opened. A sailor skilfully drew one wing up to the side of the ship, holding it so it would not bump the vessel. Jimmy walked out on the wing and climbed aboard the vessel. At once his plane was allowed

to drift a few fathoms to leeward, where it was safe.

The sailors, eager for news from shore, flocked around Jimmy. They plied him with questions. When he had answered all they asked, he put a few questions himself. He wanted to know about all the interesting things he saw. The huge anchor chain and the anchor itself interested Jimmy. The chain was the thickest chain Jimmy had ever seen. The links were made of iron two inches thick, and each link was strengthened by a cast-iron stud. Jimmy whistled when the captain told him that a single fathom of the chain weighed close to 200 pounds, and that the entire chain, measuring only 120 fathoms, weighed about twelve tons. Of course, the chain had to be moved by an engine.

The anchors, too, attracted Jimmy. One of them was at the bottom of the sea, of course, but the other was stopped fast at the bow of the vessel, ready to be let down at a moment's notice. It was a mushroom anchor, and got its name from its shape; for it looked for all the world like a huge metal toadstool. The circular edge

of the anchor was sharp, so it would bite into the bottom of the sea easily.

But the thing that interested Jimmie most was the light. This, the captain said, was an occulting white light, that was visible for twelve out of every fifteen seconds. The light at the forward masthead is always used, excepting when that light is out of commission. Then the after light shines.

"If there was a string of lights like this one, each with a distinctive flash," said Jimmy, "a fellow could find his way by night at sea as easily as he can follow his route on land when he follows the Air Mail beacons."

"There is a string of lights all along the coast," said the captain, "and each has its distinctive flash. Most of them are on land, but a few are floating lights, like this, which mark danger points far out from shore."

Jimmy discovered that the great twelve-inch steam fog-whistle blows for three seconds in each fifteen, when the fog is bad at this light station, and the fog bell rings once every thirty seconds. Once every twelve seconds the submarine bell

strikes two groups of two strokes each. And the radio fog-signal of the *Ambrose* lightship is a continuous string of dashes, exactly like the signal of the radio beacons along the lighted airway. Thus, whether a passing ship's captain sees the light or merely hears the fog-horn, or detects the radio signal, he knows what lightship he is passing.

Jimmy was so much interested in learning about the lightship that he could have spent hours aboard of her, but the captain warned him that the liner was visible on the horizon. Jimmy knew it was time for him to be stirring. His plane was drawn up to the ship and he got carefully aboard of her. Soon he was in the air. He came down close to the pilot-boat, which was ready to put a pilot aboard the approaching steamer. The men on this boat said they would get his photographs for him when they put the pilot aboard the liner.

The big steamer came plowing along, her speed gradually lessening, until she was practically at a standstill. Meantime a rowboat had taken the pilot from the pilot-boat to the side of the liner.

The pilot climbed up the ladder at the side of the ship and spoke to the photographer who stood at the rail, ready with his photographs. These were carefully wrapped for protection. He handed them to a sailor who slipped down the ladder with them and put them in the hands of one of the men in the rowboat. The little craft headed about and pulled for the pilot-boat. The liner began to move slowly and presently was steaming away at a rapid rate.

Jimmy was all ready to board his plane when the men got back with his pictures. He stowed them in his coat, climbed carefully aboard his ship, and floated away to a safe distance. Then he rose from the water, headed his plane straight for his landing-place on the southern shore of Long Island, and went streaking back with his pictures. He gave them to a waiting messenger and hustled to get back to his own field.

As he drew near the hangar he noticed great activity. Mechanics were bustling about, ships were on the line, ready to take off, and pilots were getting into their flying togs. Jimmy knew something was in the air. He was just about to

ask some one what was up when a mechanic who looked after his ship spied him and shouted: "Call up your office. You are wanted. There's a big story that broke up in Pennsylvania. I've got your ship ready to go at a moment's notice. She's been warming up for half an hour."

CHAPTER XI

Jimmy Is Tricked by His Rival

IN a moment Jimmy was in telephonic communication with his chief. "There has been a big coal mine disaster, Jimmy," said Mr. Johnson. "We have just received a despatch from Shenandoah about it. The mine is near that city. More than one hundred men are believed to have been imprisoned in the mine. It is not known how many are dead or whether any of the entombed miners are still alive. We want as complete a story of the disaster as you can gather in a short time, and we particularly want photographs. You've got just about time enough to get there and get some photographs before dark. You can pick up your story after you get your pictures. Then hustle back here. If you make as good time as you have made on some other assignments, you can get back here before 10: 30.

You ought to make it by 11: 00 for sure, and you *must* be here by 11: 15. I would send Handley with you, but he is in Phillipsburg on a story. I will try to get into touch with him by phone, and order him to go to Shenandoah, to follow up the story to-morrow."

"I'll do my best, Mr. Johnson," said Jimmy. "Good-bye. I'm off." And in less than no time he *was* off.

The minute Jimmy had reached a safe altitude and was straightened out on his course, he began to consider how he should cover this story. He had never reported the story of a coal mine disaster. He was a little uncertain as to how to get at it.

First of all, there was the matter of topography. Shenandoah was in the very heart of the anthracite region in Pennsylvania. That meant it was right among the hills. Jimmy knew the region well. It was almost on the Air Mail route. In fact, in a straight line it was only three miles from Ringtown. But a great ridge—the North Mahanoy Mountain, that towered aloft almost 1,900 feet—rose between Ringtown and Shenan-

doah. The highway between the two places, circuitous and winding, was probably twice that distance. Jimmy was of course sure that he could make a landing at Ringtown. But whether he could do so at Shenandoah or not, he did not know. The town itself occupied almost every foot of the level land in the little bottom in which it stood. On every side the ground rose sharply.

Jimmy managed to get the proper topographic map from his map case. Folding it in small compass he studied it as he flew along. The only place where there seemed to be even the possibility of making a safe landing was in the tiny bottom along Lost Creek, southwest of the town. But the more Jimmy studied the map, the more impossible this place seemed for his purpose. Jimmy finally decided that he would not take a chance. He would land at Ringtown, get a motor car, and drive to Shenandoah.

"If Johnnie Lee is home," thought Jimmy, "there won't be a bit of trouble about that. Johnnie will take me over there in his car. That will be just the thing, too. Then he can help me cover the story. I can tell him what to do and

he can do it readily enough. It will give him a start toward reporting. Johnnie will know the country round about, too, and that may be a very great advantage. For I see now that it is going to hustle me to get back on time. I'm sure glad this has turned out this way."

A load seemed to drop from Jimmy's mind. He had come to a decision as to his course. Now he had only to drive ahead as fast as possible along the way he had chosen. He felt his confidence growing.

Suddenly he heard his own name sounding in his head phones. "The New York *Press* speaking to Jimmy Donnelly," said the voice. "We have been in touch with Handley at Phillipsburg. He will go with you to Shenandoah. Land at Easton and wait for him. He is on the watch for you."

Jimmy hardly knew whether to be pleased or sorry. He would be glad enough of Handley's help. Even the two of them could not clean up the story in the short time Jimmy would have at the scene of the disaster. But now that Jimmy saw an opportunity to help his friend Johnnie

Lee, he rather regretted that Handley was to join him. They could hardly bother with Johnnie now.

These thoughts went through Jimmy's mind in an instant. They did not prevent him from answering promptly the *Morning Press* message. He put his mouthpiece to his lips and said: "Jimmy Donnelly talking to the New York *Press*. I have your message about Handley and will wait for him at Easton."

When Jimmy reached that city, it looked for a little time as though he would not be able to keep his word. It hardly seemed possible to make a landing. But west of the city Jimmy found some fields and got down safely, though he had a scare when he saw a fence loom up suddenly before him. His plane struck sand and came to a stop within ten feet of the fence.

Jimmy hopped out of the ship and looked about him. Handley was nowhere in sight. "He'll have to come along pretty soon if we are to get the stuff back to New York in time," thought Jimmy. "I wonder if there is anything I could do to help matters."

He thought of Johnnie Lee. "If I could talk to him," muttered Jimmy, "I could put him right to work."

With Jimmy, to think was to act. Not far away was a house. Jimmy raced over to it, and was rejoiced to see that telephone wires ran to the house. He knocked at the door. A pleasant faced woman answered his knock.

"Good afternoon," said Jimmy, politely. "I need very much to use a telephone. May I use yours?"

The woman looked him over. "I take it you are the pilot of the plane that just landed," she said.

"I am," said Jimmy, "and I am in a trying situation. It will help me greatly if I may use your phone."

"Go ahead," she said. "You are welcome. I'll be glad if it will help you."

Jimmy called for the long-distance operator and asked for the Lee home in Ringtown. He begged the operator to hurry the call, as it was an urgent one. In a very few moments Jimmy had his connection. To his delight, Johnnie him-

self answered the telephone. Jimmy recognized his voice at once.

"Hello, Johnnie," he said. "This is Jimmy Donnelly. Have you heard anything about a mine explosion in your neighborhood?"

"We sure have," said Johnnie. "It was near Krebs. It was a terrible affair."

"Where's Krebs?" demanded Jimmy.

"About two miles from here. It's at the foot of North Mahanoy Mountain."

"What do you know about the disaster, Johnnie?"

"A lot, Jimmy. My father's first cousin, Pat Healy, telephoned us all about it. He's a foreman in the mine, and was just on his way out when the explosion occurred. He got out all right, though he was hurt some. But he says there are scores of men entombed."

"Can you get hold of him again, Johnnie?" cried Jimmy, his voice almost shaking with eagerness.

"Sure. He lives near us. Why?"

"It's like this, Johnnie. I'm on my way out to cover this story. I've got to get pictures and

as much of the story as I can pick up in a little while. But I had to land in Easton to pick up Mr. Handley. That's going to delay me a lot. This is a chance for you to show what you can do in collecting news. Will you try it?"

"Will I? You bet your neck I will. What do you want me to do?"

"Have you got a camera?"

"Yes, I have."

"Then get some pictures of the wrecked mine if you can, and of the mine entrance, injured miners, crowds at the shaft, or anything else that will illustrate the story."

"I can do that easily. I can drive to the mouth of the mine in less than ten minutes. I'll hustle right over and get all the pictures I can. Anything else?"

"Sure. Get the story. Get hold of your father's cousin again. Find as many survivors as possible. See anybody you can who is in authority at the mine and get a statement from him. Get all the details you can."

"Just what do you want, Jimmy?"

"Find out what happened, when it happened,

where it happened, how it happened, why it happened, and to whom it happened. Get every detail you can about every phase of the story. Get the names of the dead and injured, if possible. Find out how many are still in the mine. Maybe Mr. Healy can tell you. Get a story of the explosion from him. Find out how it happened and what caused it. Get Mr. Healy to tell you about the mine itself—what it is like, whether there is any chance for rescue, whether there are places where the imprisoned men can take refuge in the mine. Ask all the questions you can think of. Try to get enough stuff together so you can tell me a complete story of the disaster when I get there."

"I'll do it, Jimmy. I'm off this minute. Good-bye."

Jimmy said good-bye and rang off. "That was a lucky thought," he muttered, "to set Johnnie to work. He's evidently got the inside track. He may be able to get the whole story."

Jimmy ascertained the amount of his tolls and paid the woman. She had heard his talk with Johnnie and was intensely interested. She asked

Jimmy question after question about his work as a flying reporter. Before Jimmy knew it, half an hour had passed. Then he noticed a clock and frowned. He looked out at his plane. Some small boys had gathered about it, but there was no sign of Handley. Fifteen minutes more passed, and Jimmy was growing desperate. Finally he reached for the telephone again. "Please get me the New York *Morning Press*," he told the operator.

When Jimmy finally got his connection, he called for Mr. Johnson. "Have you any idea how long it is going to take Handley to reach me here at Easton?" he asked. "I've waited for him more than an hour already. I've got to push on if I am to get any photographs."

"What's this about Handley and Easton and waiting an hour? What are you talking about?" demanded the managing editor.

"What am I talking about!" exclaimed Jimmy. "I am talking about Handley. You ordered me to wait for him in Easton. I've been here at Easton for more than an hour. Can you give me any idea how soon he will arrive? I can't

possibly wait much longer if I am to get back with the story in time for the midnight edition."

"You're in Easton! Waiting for Handley! What are you talking about? I never ordered you to stop at Easton. You ought to be in Shenandoah this very minute."

"You never ordered me to stop at Easton!" cried Jimmy. "Somebody did. I received a radio message forty minutes after I took off, telling me you had ordered Handley to join me here and ordering me to wait for him. I acknowledged the message and supposed you had my acknowledgment."

"Somebody has put one over on you, Jimmy," said the managing editor. "It's a pretty bad business. But we have no time to discuss it now. Get on to Shenandoah as fast as you can and do the best you can. I want to see you about this as soon as you get back here. Now hustle."

Jimmy was mortified, angry, and anxious. His face showed his anxiety. He paid his telephone tolls and raced back to his plane. As fast as he could, he got his ship into the air. Then he opened his throttle as far as it would open and

went streaking along the Air Mail route for Ringtown.

In less than half an hour he dropped down on the landing field at that place. He leaped from his plane, threw off his flying togs, and raced for Johnnie Lee's house. Johnnie's mother met him at the door.

"Johnnie's expecting you," she said. "He called up a few minutes ago and said you should call him at Healy's when you arrived. Come in. I'll get the connection for you." And in no time she had it. She asked for Johnnie and handed the receiver to Jimmy.

"Hello, Johnnie," he said. "This is Jimmy. I just arrived at your house. Where are you? How can I get into touch with you?"

"I'm at Healy's. It's straight down the road. Mother will show you the way. Come over as quick as you can. Mr. Healy is talking to me now."

Jimmy hung up the receiver, got directions from Mrs. Lee, and raced down the road. In ten minutes he was in the Healy home.

"What have you done and what have you

learned?" Jimmy demanded, after Johnnie had introduced him to Mr. Healy.

"I went right over to the mine with my camera, after you called me, and I have a whole roll of films for you—a dozen pictures. They ought to be good, for the conditions were just right for taking them. I got a picture of the mine mouth, the crowd about it, some snaps of the rescue crews descending into the mine, one of an injured miner who was hurt in the attempt at rescue, and other similar pictures."

"Good! They are just what I want. What about the story?"

"I believe I have the whole thing. Mr. Healy was in the mine when the explosion occurred. In fact, he was close to the very spot where it happened. He saw the explosion occur. He was injured slightly, but not disabled. He gathered together all the men within call and started for an old opening that is no longer used. The explosion had prevented escape through the shaft used nowadays. Gases began to spread through the mine, and the men with Mr. Healy were overcome one by one. Those still able to walk tried

to drag the others out. But the only man who got out on his own feet was my cousin. He dragged out one man. Then he collapsed himself. He came to in about half an hour and managed to stagger home. He telephoned about the man he had dragged out, and some miners came and got him. We heard about it over the telephone, just before you called me from Easton."

"Won't you repeat your story to me, Mr. Healy?" asked Jimmy. "Just start at the beginning. Tell me what the conditions were like in the mine when the explosion came. That is, about how many men you think went into the mine, how many were still in it, and what the mine is like. Give me a mental picture of it, so I can follow your story. Then start again with the explosion and tell me what you saw and did."

For half an hour Mr. Healy talked steadily, stopping only when he was interrupted by Jimmy with a question. He gave Jimmy an excellent picture of the mine workings. Mr. Healy had been a foreman in this particular mine for years, and knew every foot of it as workers above

ground know the cities in which they live. Then he told of the explosion, pictured the damage it did, showed how it shut off escape by the newer shaft, and pictured the situation of the imprisoned men. He estimated their number at more than one hundred.

"If the gas was as severe in other chambers as it was where we were," he said, "most of those one hundred men are now dead. I have been using the telephone, and so far as I can learn, we two men who got out through the old drift are the only men who have escaped. Unless some of the miners were able to retreat to dead ends of passages, ahead of the gas, and make air-tight barricades to keep the gas out, I fear every man in the mine is past help. But we shall not know for sure until the rescue crews have searched every foot of the workings. That will take many hours, and perhaps some days."

Jimmy checked back over his notes. His story seemed to be very complete. He asked for a few more details about this point or that. Then he thrust his notes into his pocket. "You have given me a very complete account, Mr. Healy," he said.

"I can write a mighty clear story just from these notes. But I must see the mine myself, and the mine mouth, and the crowds, and if possible I must talk with some of the officials. You don't feel well enough to go over there with me, do you?"

"Yes, I am all right now," said Mr. Healy. "I'll be glad to go with you."

They hurried out to Johnnie's car and were rushed over to the mouth of the mine, which was hardly more than a mile distant. Parking the car, the three walked about through the crowd, observing, asking questions, gathering up what incidents they could.

"There's the superintendent," said Mr. Healy, as a large man came out of one of the mine buildings. "Would you like to talk to him?"

"I surely would," answered Jimmy.

"Then come on."

They walked toward the man. While they were still at some distance from him, they saw a young man hurry up to him and lay a detaining hand on his arm. The superintendent looked surprised. The young man said something. The

superintendent brushed him roughly aside and went on. He seemed angry. He was still frowning when he came face to face with Mr. Healy and the two lads.

"Pat, I'm mighty glad to see you," said the superintendent, "but I am mighty sad to see you alone. I fear it's all up with the men underground."

"This young man wants to talk to you," said Mr. Healy. "He's a reporter from New York."

"So was that jackass that just tried to stop me," said the superintendent. "I don't want to talk to reporters."

"But this lad is a very good friend of mine," urged Mr. Healy. "And he is a gentleman. I know you will be willing to talk to him."

"Well, what is it?" said the superintendent. "I haven't much time to spare. This is a crowded hour for me."

"Thank you very much," said Jimmy. "I know how you feel. I don't blame you for not wanting to talk about this terrible affair. I appreciate your courtesy." Then Jimmy began to ask questions, in a courteous, considerate man-

ner. The mine official gave him all the information he asked for.

When the interview was ended, the superintendent walked on. So did the Healy party. Presently Jimmy heard a voice saying: "There he is. He's the only man who escaped unaided. He dragged out another man, and they are the only men who have reached the surface so far."

"I'll get a statement from him," replied another voice.

Jimmy knew this latter voice well—too well. He began to tremble with anger. A sudden light shone in upon him. Now he understood the game that had been played upon him. Now he knew who had tricked him into landing at Easton. The voice he was listening to was the voice of Rand.

Like a shot Jimmy turned to Johnnie. "If you think anything of me, Johnnie," he said, "don't let your cousin talk to the fellow who is coming to interview him. It's Rand, the fellow I have told you about. It was Rand who stopped the superintendent a little while ago, though at a distance I did not recognize him. But I know well enough now who it was."

Johnnie laid his hand on Mr. Healy's arm. "Pat," he said, "this fellow who is approaching to talk to you is Jimmy's worst enemy. He has just played a dirty trick on him. Don't say a word to him."

"Played a dirty trick on Jimmy, did he? Very well. He gets no news from me."

A moment later Rand stepped up and began to question the mine foreman. "I have nothing to say. See the superintendent," snapped Mr. Healy. And turning on his heel, he strode away, with Johnnie and Jimmy at his heels.

But as Jimmy walked away, he said: "Rand, dirty tricks don't pay. You thought you had put over a clever one when you got me down at Easton to-day, but your game failed. This is what came of it. You lose out yourself." And Jimmy hurried after Mr. Healy and Johnnie, while Rand stood and cursed him. "I'll get you yet," Jimmy heard him say. But Jimmy wasn't caring about Rand's threats. He held all the aces in the pack himself.

CHAPTER XII

Jimmy Lands a Job for Johnnie

WHEN Jimmy had finished writing his story, after a fast trip back to his office, where he arrived well ahead of his deadline, he reported to the managing editor.

"Well, I see you got here in time anyway, Jimmy," smiled that official. "Your photographs are fine, but they are a little small. Why didn't you use your regular news camera?"

"I didn't take the pictures, Mr. Johnson. Johnnie Lee took them. He had to use his own camera because I was miles away, at Easton. He got the story, too, and he got the details in fine shape. If it hadn't been for Johnnie, I guess I'd still be at the mine."

"This sounds interesting. How did your young friend get into the affair, anyway? Tell me about it."

"There isn't much to tell, Mr. Johnson. When I landed at Easton, and didn't see Handley anywhere, I suspected I might have to wait some time for him, so I called Johnnie up at his home. By good luck he was right at hand. He lives within two miles of the wrecked mine. I asked him to see what he could do for me. He skipped right over in his car, got the photographs, rounded up the only man who escaped from the mine on his own feet, and had the whole story in hand when I reached there. He introduced me to this survivor, who is a foreman in the mine, and so was able to give us such a comprehensive description of the place. Then Johnnie took us both back to the mine, so I could see the place and the crowds for myself. The foreman got me an interview with the mine superintendent. And by the way, the superintendent had just refused to talk to Rand."

"Rand, eh? So he's working on this story." The managing editor's eyes narrowed to mere slits. He looked at Jimmy intently. "You don't suppose, Jimmy, that Rand ——"

"Yes, sir, I *do* suppose so," interrupted

Jimmy. "I'd be willing to bet my last nickel that it was Rand who tricked me into landing at Easton. You know the paper he works for has a plane at the same field where we keep ours. I didn't see Rand at the field before I took off, but I believe he was there. And I believe that in some way he got wind of the fact that you had ordered me to Shenandoah. I have no proof of that, and I don't see how I can get proof. He might easily have picked up the fact from employees about the field. My mechanic knew that you wanted me to make the trip. He told me so the instant I got in from my flight out to sea. He might have mentioned the matter to other people about the field. Of course everybody soon knew about the disaster, and it was a safe bet that I would have to fly to the scene. Rand would know that."

"Yes, or some one may have tapped our wire. Or some one may be paying mechanics at the field to keep tabs on you. I know of at least one newspaper in this town that wouldn't be above such work. You just watch yourself, Jimmy. Keep your eyes and ears open and see if you can't find

out more about this matter. Everything turned out well this time, but you won't always have a Johnnie Lee on the spot to pull you out of a hole."

"That's what he did, Mr. Johnson. Johnnie pulled me out of a great big hole. I might have rounded up the story after I got there, but I could not possibly have gotten the pictures also. It grew dark soon after I reached the mine. Johnnie made a fine job of it. I believe you will say so, too, when you read his story."

Just then a copy boy thrust some proofs into Mr. Johnson's hands.

"Here it is," said the managing editor. "Now we'll see what your story is like."

"It's really Johnnie's story, Mr. Johnson," protested Jimmy. "Please read it and see if you don't think Johnnie has shown enough ability now to start in as a cub."

Mr. Johnson smiled. "What a fine world it would be, Jimmy," he said, "if we all had such loyal friends as Johnnie Lee has in you."

Then he began to read, and the expression on his face showed well enough that he was inter-

ested. When he had finished, he laid down the proofs. "It's a good story, Jimmy," he said.

"Then does Johnnie get his job?" demanded Jimmy.

"You are nothing if not an ardent partisan, Jimmy. I hadn't any idea of employing Johnnie; but he has been so useful to us that if he wants to come on here and start in as a cub, at the lowest salary we pay cubs, we'll give him a chance. I somehow have a feeling that he has good stuff in him."

"Indeed he has, Mr. Johnson. You'll never be sorry you hired him. When do you want him to report for work?"

"There's no hurry, Jimmy. I'll drop him a line in a few days. I want him to understand exactly the terms on which he comes and the amount of pay he will receive while he is learning his job."

"Thank you ever so much, Mr. Johnson. I'll do all I can to help him make good." And Jimmy walked out of the managing editor's office as happy as a lark. Altogether, it had been a mighty good day for Jimmy.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good," he thought. "If Rand hadn't pulled me down at Easton, Johnnie would never have gotten this job. It just seems to me as though most of the things that look like difficulties when they occur are really opportunities. It's been that way with me more than once. The main thing is to keep a stiff upper lip, use your head, and just keep on going. I'll try to remember that the next time I get in a pinch."

Jimmy went back to his ship, to see that she was put in shape for instant use again. He was very happy. Not only had he made good again for himself, but he had helped his old friend. He had secured for him the opening that Johnnie so much desired. He wanted to write to Johnnie and tell him about the situation, but he decided not to do it. "Mr. Johnson evidently prefers to write to him himself," thought Jimmy. "I don't want to do anything that could possibly gum things up." So he restrained himself.

It wasn't long, however, before Jimmy had abundant opportunity to tell Johnnie all about the matter. A new and important airport was

to be opened in central Pennsylvania. Celebrated fliers by the dozens were to be on hand. An attractive program of races and flying stunts had been arranged, and the affair had been given great publicity. Mr. Johnson decided to send a man to cover the story. Quite naturally, he selected Jimmy.

"Go up there and get us a good story, Jimmy," he said. "If all the fliers are present who are advertised to be there, this will be a very interesting gathering. And by the way, I suppose you will fly out along the Air Mail route. If you do, stop at Ringtown and take Johnnie Lee along with you. I wrote him two days ago, offering him a job, and I just received his reply. He is eager to come. Pick him up and take him to the airport opening with you. I'll give you credentials for him. He can start right in with you. And remember, I expect you to help him learn his job."

"Thank you, Mr. Johnson," replied Jimmy. "I'll do my very best to help Johnnie. You won't be sorry you hired him. I'll pick him up as I fly out, and bring him back to the city with me."

"That's exactly what I wish," replied the managing editor.

So it happened that when Jimmy flew to the air races, he stopped at Ringtown and picked up his old friend. Then the two flew on to the airport.

The aviation meeting was all it had been advertised to be. Scores of pilots were present, many of them famous veterans of the air. The edge of the flying field was lined for hundreds of yards with ships that were crowded so close together their wing tips almost touched. There were flying machines of almost every known variety. Tiny Moth planes stood wing to wing with huge tri-motored cabin ships that would hold a dozen passengers each. There were monoplanes and biplanes, and even some gliders were to be seen. The Army and the Navy were represented by several fliers each. The planes of the latter instantly caught the eye, as they stood on the line, in military formation, noticeable among all other planes for their blazing insignia on their wing surfaces. It was a sight to delight a pilot's heart.

Yet the ground show was nothing compared

to the exhibition in the air. Aloft there was a constant stream of ships. Some were arriving, some departing, some were carrying passengers at so much a ride, some were stunting, and others were merely aloft for the pleasure of it. Then came races. The air was cleared of all other fliers, and the speedsters had their innings. Back and forth they darted along a course many miles long, one end of which was in the centre of the new airport. Around the striped pylon they roared, some darting upward on the turn, others roaring around on level keel. And so steeply were the ships banked that each seemed fairly to be standing on one wing as it whirled around the pylon. It was a stirring sight.

But the performance that stopped every heart and made every onlooker hold his breath was the parachute jumps. Jimmy and Johnnie had gone aloft again by the time the jumping started. Ever since Jimmy had received the piece of Warren Long's parachute, he had felt a particular interest in parachute jumps. He believed he could see the jumps better if he were in the air, about on the level with the jumpers, than he could see

them if he were on the ground. Likewise, he wanted to get some photographs of the jumpers, taken from aloft. So he and Johnnie had gone aloft once more.

They flew along lazily, to the rear of the ship that held the jumpers. And they were a little lower than this ship. Jimmy wanted to see just how the parachutes worked. He had selected an excellent viewpoint; for when the first jumper walked out on a wing of the ship and calmly dropped toward the earth, Jimmy could see his every movement. Down dropped the man, straight as a plummet, hardly moving his body or limbs, until he was well below the plane. Then Jimmy saw him reach for the rip-cord, grasp the metal ring, and give it a sharp jerk. With an instant response the covers of the parachute pack snapped open, the folds of the white silk "umbrella" were caught by the wind, ballooning out and opening full with a crack that could be heard all over the huge airport. The downward flight of the jumper was checked. With a jerk he spun upright, then settled toward the earth under his wide-spreading canopy. He landed safely, amid

great applause. Johnnie got several fine snaps with the camera, while the jump was taking place.

Another jumper followed. This one elected to come down awhirling. He stepped off backward, and went spinning toward the earth like a ball. When he pulled his rip-cord, his parachute pulled him upright with a jerk that, as Jimmy phrased it, must have splashed his liver against his backbone like a butcher throwing a slab of beef on the block. But the jumper landed safe and sound and appeared none the worse for his experience.

The best performance—at least the one that most attracted the crowd—had been reserved for the last. A woman was to do some stunts and then put on a parachute and jump. She was a slender young flier, whom the *Morning Press* men had noticed at the hangar. She was clad in a light flying suit, and her short hair was bound tight with a broad red ribbon wound about her brow.

When she came out on the wing of the plane, preparatory to giving her exhibition, Jimmy could feel his pulse quicken perceptibly. The sight of men about to risk their lives had not

stirred him so much. They were fliers, like himself, and every pilot expected that some day he might have to make the trip to the ground in a parachute. But to see a young woman risking her life, merely to make a show for a curious multitude, stirred Jimmy as it did others. He knew well enough that the crowd on the ground was standing in breathless suspense. He flew his plane as near to the jumper's ship as he dared, so Johnnie could get some close-up snapshots.

Jimmy watched the woman like a hawk. He noticed her every movement. She made her way along the wing of the plane. A rope ladder had been fastened to a strut. This the woman untied and lowered. Then she swung over the edge of the wing and made her way down the rope ladder. She had no parachute. Should she lose her grip or be jolted from the ladder she would fall straight to earth and be crushed. Jimmy almost shuddered as he looked at her. It seemed terrible to him that any one should risk life in this way. He could hardly bear to watch her. Yet he had come aloft to see the performance and he steeled himself to watch. He kept his plane moving at

the same rate as the exhibition ship but at a lower level.

Down the rope ladder came the young woman. This swung and swayed uncertainly in the breeze. At the bottom of the ladder was a strong metal rung or crossbar. It helped to keep the ladder from blowing backward too far. When the performer came to this metal bar she did not pause but grasped it with both hands and lowered her body into space. There she dangled, a thousand feet in air, with nothing between her and an awful death but her own good grip. Jimmy could feel chills of horror running up and down his spine. He prayed that the air would stay calm. He could hardly bear to look at the woman when she released one hand from the bar and swung for a moment by a single arm. It was too much for Jimmy. He looked away.

When he brought his glance back to the woman she had altered her position. Now she was hanging by her knees, her head down, as the ship flew along. For several minutes she did acrobatic stunts at the end of the swaying ladder. And during all that time Jimmy was in a tremble.

But the young woman was as steady as Gibraltar. She lost neither her nerve nor her grip. Presently she climbed back up the ladder, rolled and fastened it to the strut, and then climbed to the upper wing, where she braced herself and stood upright with nothing whatever to hold to, while the ship shot through the air at seventy miles an hour.

Again Jimmy was in a fever of fear. If she slipped, if the plane plunged and threw her off her balance, if the air grew bumpy and tumbled the ship about, there could be but one end to the exhibition. The young woman would be thrown off her balance and blown out into space. Once more Jimmy turned his look away. He could not bear to look at her.

When he glanced again at the ship he was following he saw something that electrified him, that shocked him into instant activity. From the crankcase of the ship ahead of him flames were leaping.

Quick as thought Jimmy turned to his companion. "Get the tie rope," he shouted, indicating with a sweep of his arm where he kept the

rope with which he tied his plane down when he had to leave it out over night.

Johnnie had the long, strong rope out in no time. He knotted one end of it fast in the cabin, so it could not get away from him. Meantime Jimmy opened his throttle and his ship darted upward and to one side. In a moment it was almost wing and wing with the exhibition ship.

The other pilot glanced out and saw Jimmy's plane. Johnnie leaned from a cabin window and began making vigorous gestures. He pointed to the woman on the upper wing of the exhibition plane. She was utterly unconscious that anything was wrong. Then Johnnie held up his rope and made a gesture to indicate that he would try to pick up the woman on the plane wing. For a moment the pilot looked at Johnnie as though he did not comprehend. It came to Johnnie that the pilot did not yet know his ship was afire. The flames were underneath the engine, and he had not yet noticed them. Violently Johnnie gestured toward the crankcase. The pilot got partly to his feet and peered over the edge of his plane. Instantly he saw what was wrong. Johnnie once

more held up his rope and pointed to the woman on the upper wing. The pilot nodded agreement.

"He understands," shouted Johnnie.

With a suddenness that almost threw Johnnie off his feet, Jimmy banked his plane and circled. In a moment he was once more to the rear of the exhibition plane, but now he was above it. The ship was flying slowly, on level keel. Very carefully, like a refueling plane about to fuel another ship, Jimmy flew his craft over and a trifle ahead of the other plane. Johnnie was watching carefully.

"There!" he shouted. "You're just right. Slow her up a bit."

Jimmy followed instructions. In a moment he was keeping pace with the other ship, but was slightly in advance of it. Johnnie leaned through the open window and started to lower the rope. The wind blew it almost straight back. He drew the rope in and fastened the starter handle to it with a loose knot. Then he leaned from the window once more and carefully but swiftly lowered the rope.

Meantime the young woman on the wing below

him had been watching with curious interest. She did not understand what was afoot. It was well she did not. She might have lost her nerve. She caught the rope as it came level with her and held it uncertainly, meantime looking up at Johnnie questioningly. Johnnie saw that she did not comprehend the situation. He pointed toward the blazing crankcase. The girl held fast to his rope and took a step toward the leading edge of the plane wing. The moment she saw the flames she shrank back in evident terror, and Johnnie's heart almost stood still with fear lest she fall from the plane wing. But she recovered her nerve in an instant. Grasping the starter handle, she quickly untied it and laid it down on the wing. That one act told Johnnie that she had a complete grip on herself. Otherwise she might thoughtlessly have tossed it into the air. In a second the girl had the rope around her body, just below her arms. She tied it tight, with knot after knot. Then she looked up and nodded.

Johnnie braced himself and began to haul on the rope. A foot at a time he dragged the girl upward, while she clung with both hands to the

life line. It was fortunate she was light in weight. Johnnie was working at a disadvantage. He could not get all his muscles into play. Yet slowly he lifted the girl upward until she could grasp the window-frame. Then Johnnie threw open the cabin door, which was immediately beside the window, and reached out and grasped the girl. At the same time she slid her foot within the cabin of the plane and pulled herself, with Johnnie's help, after it. Even above the roar of both motors Johnnie could hear the tremendous cheer that came up from the ground. Johnnie slammed the door shut and fastened it. Then he turned to the girl. She had slumped to the floor, as pale as death. But it was merely the reaction after her moment of peril.

Meantime, Jimmy opened his throttle, pulled back on his stick, and shot his plane upward for hundreds of feet. By the time he leveled off, the pilot below him, who had seen a part of the rescue, had acted to save his own life. The fire had spread rapidly. Flames were beginning to shoot into the cockpit. Adjusting the stabilizer of his ship so that she was slightly nose heavy, the pilot

headed his plane toward a near-by woods. Then he stepped over the side, and a moment later was floating safely downward under his open parachute. He landed near the flying field, without a scratch.

Seeing the pilot safe and the air clear, for the burning plane soon crashed in the woods, Jimmy swooped down and landed in the middle of the flying field. His plane rolled rapidly toward the judge's stand and he taxied it close to the railing that kept the crowd from the field. A doctor and several officials rushed out to the ship to look after the young woman. She was still in a state of collapse. Carefully they assisted her to the hangar and gave her the necessary attention.

Jimmy was glad enough to have her off his hands. He was waiting for his engine to cool a bit before cutting the switch. Then he intended to hurry to the telegraph station and send off a wire. His whole attention was now centered on the story he must send.

What was his astonishment, then, when the crowd broke through the barriers and a veritable mob came charging toward him as he stepped

from his ship. For a second Jimmy was dumbfounded. He did not understand what was happening. But it did not take him very long to learn. As he and Johnnie stepped clear of the ship the crowd thundered up. A hundred hands were thrust out at them. A babel of voices arose in shouted greetings. Men and women swarmed about them, patting them on their backs, slapping their shoulders, and reaching for their hands. Then somebody caught them both from behind, eager hands lifted them bodily, and in another moment they were riding from the field on the shoulders of sturdy men, while the crowd yelled itself hoarse.

CHAPTER XIII

Jimmy Has an Adventure with a Bootlegger

IT was nearly ten o'clock that night when the two young fliers walked into the *Morning Press* office in New York, tired but happy. Jimmy had filed his story as soon as he could get away from the crowd and write it. A hasty bite to eat had followed, and then the two young reporters had hopped off for Long Island, which they reached quickly and without incident. Now Jimmy was waiting to see the managing editor.

He did not have to wait long. Mr. Johnson soon sent for him. Jimmy took Johnnie with him, and the two stepped into the managing editor's office.

"Well, Jimmy, I'm glad to see you back safe and sound," said Mr. Johnson. "Sit down and tell me about your trip. I have about come to the

conclusion that any time news is scarce hereafter I shall send you out on an assignment. You seem to have more adventures than any reporter I ever heard of. When I hired you, it was to *get* the news. I never dreamed that you would also *provide* the news. As I recall it, I paid you a certain sum to act as pilot, and I had to increase your pay considerably when you blossomed out into a reporter as well as a pilot. Now I suppose you'll be asking for still more money because you *make* the news as well as report it."

Jimmy laughed with the managing editor, who was evidently feeling well pleased. "I'll be glad to tell you about my trip, Mr. Johnson," he said, "but first I want to introduce my friend Johnnie Lee. He's your new reporter and he helped to make the news to-day."

"Johnnie, I'm glad to know you," said Mr. Johnson, shaking the lad's hand warmly. "You certainly made a fine start with the *Press*. It was my idea that you were to come here as a cub, and start at the very bottom of the ladder. But it looks as though you have been learning some tricks from Jimmy. I suppose you'll want a raise

right away." And the managing editor laughed heartily.

"No, sir," said Johnnie. "I don't want anything more just now than a chance and enough to live on." Then he added, "But I'll try to deserve the raise before very long."

"You had better borrow a rabbit's foot from Jimmy," chuckled Mr. Johnson. "He carries them in every pocket. He has—excuse me, until I look at these."

A copy boy had just brought him proofs of Jimmy's photographs.

"Jimmy," said the managing editor, after looking at the proofs, "just what breed of rabbit is it that you get your rabbit feet from? You have the greatest luck of any fellow I ever knew. You've got the most remarkable picture here that's been taken since—since—well, since Clint Murphy snapped Forest O'Brine working on the engine of the endurance plane, the *St. Louis Robin,* 3,000 feet above the ground. That picture was a wonder. But you've got one here to equal it. It's a close-up snap of that woman parachute jumper dangling from her plane."

"I'm mighty glad it came out good," said Jimmy, "but I didn't take it. Johnnie snapped all the photos while I flew the ship. It's his picture, Mr. Johnson."

"It doesn't matter who snapped the camera," said the managing editor. "It took two of you to get it. We'll surely beat the town on this."

"Yes, we shall," replied Jimmy. "There wasn't another plane in the air when she was performing except our two ships. Nobody else could have gotten a close-up of the thing."

"I'd just like to know, Jimmy," grinned the managing editor, "exactly what breed of rabbit you cultivate. You take a tip from me, Johnnie, and get some feet from this same breed. Now you boys run along. I've got to get to work."

Jimmy introduced his friend to Mr. Davis, the city editor, who would henceforth be Johnnie's boss. Then he made Johnnie known to several of the reporters. Finally the two young men left the office and went to Jimmy's boarding house, for they had decided that they would room together. In a little while they were both asleep, but at intervals through the night Jimmy

dreamed about the accident to the parachute jumper that he had witnessed.

He saw little of Johnnie thereafter, for their hours did not synchronize. Most of the time Jimmy's work was done in daylight hours, whereas Johnnie went to work early in the afternoon and worked until late at night. But they roomed together, sleeping in separate beds, and left notes for each other, and could of course see each other when occasion demanded.

The days passed quickly. Johnnie learned rapidly. Jimmy had few assignments of an exciting nature. His luck seemed to have deserted him. He carried pictures, transported reporters, covered a few unimportant stories. Time hung heavy on his hands. Meantime the autumn passed and winter came. It came with a rush and it came early. Almost over night the balmy days of Indian summer changed into days of fierce winds and icy chill. From all parts of the country came reports of intense cold. Almost in a twinkling navigation in the north was tied up. The lakes and streams were frostbound and frozen. Steamers were caught in the ice, far

from land. Suffering was intense. Deaths were reported in many quarters, due to the cold. Isolated lighthouse keepers and the dwellers on remote islands were cut off from communication. In many of these isolated places food and medicine ran low. The weather itself, with the attendant difficulties of travel, the deaths, the hardships, all consequent upon the intense cold and the deep snow and ice, became a leading story.

Day after day, belated tales of freezing, hardship, death, heroic rescues, blizzards, storms, and other phases of the weather, or stories incident to the abnormal cold, came trickling belatedly into the office. The managing editor watched this news with growing interest. He had lived, in his younger days, on the very northern border of the country and even in Canada. He knew what these periods of cold and storm meant to the people living in isolated places. And so, when one day there came a belated despatch to the *Press,* saying that a feeble wireless message had been received by a boy wireless operator in Smithville, in northern New York, telling of the plight of people on a neighboring island, in Lake

Ontario, the managing editor was filled with both interest and sympathy. The island was absolutely cut off from communication with the mainland by the terrible ice, food was running low, and a whole family was dying of pneumonia because of the lack of certain medicines.

"It's really a story for the Montreal or Rochester papers to cover," thought Mr. Johnson, "but up to this time they haven't done it. If we could slip in there ahead of them, we'd not only do some real good, but we'd bring a lot of credit to the *Morning Press*. I believe I'll see how it looks to Donnelly."

He called Jimmy on the telephone and told him about the situation. "Do you think you could reach the place safely with your plane?" he asked.

"Let me look at my maps before I answer you," said Jimmy.

Jimmy studied them a moment. "If I flew to Smithville, which is only six or seven miles south of Sackett's Harbor," he said, "and hopped off from there, I should not have to fly over more than a few miles of water. There are several

islands in a straight line close to Smithville. In case of a forced landing, I could probably make one of those islands. I think I can do it all right, and I'll be glad to go. It won't take so very long to make it, either."

"Then get your ship ready at once. I will have a physician make up a package of medicines and write down some directions to be followed in caring for patients with pneumonia. You take the stuff out to the island and find out how many are ill and how ill they are. Leave the drugs and the directions. Fly back to Smithville and communicate with me from there. Then we can determine what should be done further. Perhaps you will have to take a physician to the island. We'll do all we can to help these poor people on the island."

When all was ready, and Jimmy had his medicines aboard, he hopped off and headed straight for the Hudson, up which river he flew as far as Albany, where he swung to the left and followed the Mohawk River to Rome. Thence he followed the railway tracks direct to Smithville, where he landed in a great snow-covered field. He had

had his plane equipped with skis, and the snow did not bother him at all.

Jimmy climbed out of his plane and walked into the village to ask some questions. He wanted to know about the possibility of making a safe landing at the island, whether or not he had selected the safest route, and what was known in Smithville concerning the condition of the people on the island. He found the lad who had heard the wireless message, and he got information on all these points. He was soon satisfied that the islanders needed help, and that he had chosen the very best way to get there. The villagers told him he had estimated the distance correctly and would have to cross only a few miles of the lake. But there was little open water, they said, and the chances were that in case of a forced landing he could get down safely on the ice, which was very thick, and also rough. Jimmy said he had a radio sending set and asked some of the radio fans to listen in for him during the next half hour. Then he prepared to hop off.

To his surprise, another plane soared into the sky from a point near the lake shore on the other

side of the village, just as Jimmy was about ready to take off. He looked at the plane with dismay. Another newspaper was going to beat him, he thought, and beat him by the tiniest of margins. But when he suggested as much to the townsfolk who had gathered about his plane, they laughed. Also they winked their eyes.

"Never mind about him," they said. "The only medicine he carries is for snakebites. He flies back and forth between Canada and points along the shore hereabout. Just what he carries we don't know for sure, but we can all guess. He'll go right on over to Canada."

Relieved, Jimmy hopped off, headed straight out over the frozen lake toward the first island, and opened his throttle. He did not like the looks of the rough ice beneath him, and he meant to reach the island as speedily as possible. Soon he saw that he was flying faster than the bootlegger ahead of him. But as he had only a few miles to go, he thought he should hardly overtake the man.

On they flew, Jimmy following straight after the other plane, and all the time creeping up on

it. To fly to the island took less than ten minutes. Yet Jimmy was glad enough when he neared the shore, for he did not like the looks of the rough pack ice beneath him. He had just started to circle over the island, in order to search out a landing place, when he noticed the bootlegger's plane acting crazily. Jimmy saw at once that something was wrong with the craft. Also, he saw that the pilot, who was already at the farther end of the island, was making a desperate effort to turn and effect a landing. The ship came down fast, landing on ground that was none too smooth, but was apparently not harmed, though the running gear might have been broken. About that, Jimmy could not be sure without a close inspection.

Sweeping completely around the island, Jimmy saw that there was no better place to land than the open space in which the bootlegger had been forced down. So he came down cautiously, in as easy a glide as he could make, ready to give her the gun instantly, should the place prove impossible. But he found a long, fairly smooth stretch before him, and set his ship down neatly in the

snow. She slid for some distance, then came to rest in perfect safety.

Jimmy hopped from his plane and looked about him. On one side was the other flying machine, and the pilot of it was walking toward him with great speed. On the other hand, at a considerable distance, was a little group of houses, doubtless the residences of the stricken islanders. But they were evidently not all stricken, for several men could be seen coming toward him.

For a moment Jimmy stood looking at them, trying to count them. He was curious about these isolated islanders, and not a little sympathetic toward them. He wondered what sort of people they would prove to be. And he was eager to get their story, and to deliver the medicines. He was also curious to know what manner of man the bootlegger would prove to be. And presently, hearing the latter's step at hand, he spun about to face him, and found himself looking into the barrel of a revolver that the approaching bootlegger had leveled at him.

Jimmy's heart began to beat violently. He was so utterly taken by surprise that he did not know

what to do or say. For a moment he was silent. The bootlegger did the talking.

"Get back into your plane," he said sharply.

Jimmy did as ordered. There was nothing else to do. To his astonishment the bootlegger climbed into the plane after him, shut the door, and sat down in one of the seats. The revolver he still held in his hand menacingly.

"Take off as quick as you can," he said gruffly.

Jimmy glanced at the advancing islanders and played for time.

"What's the big idea?" he asked, trying to appear calm, though his heart was beating a tattoo against his ribs.

"I just put a connecting-rod through my crankcase," growled the man.

"Then you want to be ferried ashore," said Jimmy. "Just as soon as I speak to these men I'll take you. I've got a package for them."

The man raised his pistol. His face was black as a thunder cloud. "If you know when you're well off, kid," he snarled, "you'll do what I tell you. Hop off and hop off quick, or I'll drill you full of holes and fly your old crate myself."

Jimmy saw that he was in a tight place. He swung about and hopped off. He headed straight back for Smithville.

"Turn her in the opposite direction," growled the man, "and just keep going."

CHAPTER XIV

Taking Help to Marooned Islanders

JIMMY obeyed the command with alacrity. There was nothing else to do. In a moment he was flying on precisely the same course he had followed in coming to the island from Smithville. Soon he was beyond Duck Island and heading for Prince Edward, that great, bold Canadian peninsula that thrusts out far into the lake. A long point of land reached straight out toward Duck Island. Jimmy could see this point easily, for it was hardly more than a dozen miles in an air-line. At some distance from the end of this point were small islands, and they were almost in Jimmy's line of flight. Five or eight minutes of flying would take him to land again, so he had no apprehensions about the short flight over this reach of open lake.

But Jimmy wasn't at all comfortable in his

mind about other aspects of the situation. If the bootlegger wanted simply to be carried across to Canada because his own plane had gone bad, that was one thing. Jimmy didn't in the least object to ferrying a man over a dozen miles of lake—even a bootlegger—if the man was in trouble. But would that be the end of the matter?

Now that the bootlegger's own plane was out of commission, he might decide to take Jimmy's. That wasn't such a pleasant prospect. But there was still another angle to the situation. If the man seized the plane, would he not almost necessarily feel compelled to get rid of the evidence of his crime? In short, would he not find it expedient to get rid of Jimmy? When Jimmy thought of the old saying, so commonly quoted by criminals, that "dead men tell no tales," he could feel the cold shivers run up and down his spine.

Jimmy wanted to turn around and talk to his captor. He felt as though a bullet might come crashing through his back at any instant. It seemed to him that he simply must look around and face the bootlegger. Yet he hesitated. The

man had told him to fly straight on. That was evidently what the fellow wanted—to get to his destination. He was getting there, and he seemed satisfied. Jimmy decided that the best course was to attend to his flying and make careful note of the country over which he passed, together with the compass bearings, rate of speed, prominent landmarks, etc., so that if he had the opportunity to fly back, he could find his way. So he centred his whole attention on the matter of navigation and soon found that he felt relieved in mind. He could think better. He was not so oppressed by fear.

But Jimmy had far less time for thought than he had anticipated. In six or seven minutes he had reached the tip of the Prince Edward peninsula, and in twenty minutes he was over the very heart of this body of land. Still he kept on as straight as the crow flies.

Now, for the first time, his unwelcome passenger spoke. "Set her down in the open space just ahead," he said gruffly.

Jimmy eased his plane toward the ground and throttled down his engine. The uniform white-

ness of the snow made it difficult for him to distinguish the contour of the ground. But as he came lower, he saw that there was a great, smooth area ahead of him that had quite evidently been used for landing planes. The snow was streaked with the long parallel marks of giant skis. Jimmy picked out a pair of ski marks and set his ship down safely almost in the very treads he was watching. The plane slid safely to rest. The landing ground was in a lonely region, and not a house or a human being was in sight.

"Get out," said the man brusquely.

Jimmy stepped from the plane. His captor followed.

"Now that you succeeded in tracking me down, what do you intend to do with your information?" he demanded, as he toyed with his revolver suggestively.

"Tracking you down!" exclaimed Jimmy, amazed. "I don't even know what you are talking about. I never saw you before, never heard of you, and certainly never tried to trail you. Where did you get that idea?"

The man looked at him uncertainly. "Ain't

you one of them government prohibition agents?" he asked.

A great light dawned upon Jimmy's mind. He actually laughed. "That's a good one," he exclaimed. "So you took me for a 'dry' agent. No, I'm not a government agent. I'm a newspaper reporter. I represent the New York *Morning Press*. Look at the name on the side of my ship."

"I can't read," said the man. "It makes no difference if you are a newspaper man. You was on my trail."

"You've got another guess," said Jimmy. "I flew up here to carry medicines to some people on Duck Island who are sick. We just got a newspaper despatch telling about them. There's a whole family dying over there because they lack medicine. Nobody could get to them because of the ice. My boss used to live up this way, and when he read the despatch he sent me up to help them."

The bootlegger looked at Jimmy intently. "You don't look like you was lyin'," he said.

"Of course I'm not lying," protested Jimmy.

"Here's the medicine." And stepping into the plane, he picked up the bulky package he had been transporting and opened it.

The rum runner looked at it and then at Jimmy. "Say, kid," he blurted out suddenly, "you're all right. To think you'd come clean from New York and risk your life flyin' over the lake just to help some sick folks. By Joe! I'll look in on them folks myself, next time I go over the island. If they need help, they need it quick I reckon. So you'd better be on your way. I'm much obliged for the ride. Maybe this'll square things with you." And he reached into his pocket, pulled out a huge roll of bills, peeled off a one hundred dollar gold certificate and thrust it into Jimmy's hand. "Now you better hustle," he said.

Jimmy was too much astonished for words. He did not want to take the man's money. He wanted less to cross the fellow, for the rum runner was quite evidently a desperate character. Wisely, Jimmy decided to go while the going was good. He handed the bill back to the man.

"Thanks," he said. "It will be worth more to

me if you will look after those people on the island. Spend the money for them. I probably can't get up here again. Good-bye." And climbing into his plane, Jimmy was off as soon as he could lift his ship from the snow. He opened his throttle wide. In a minute he was far away, beyond the possible range of any pursuing bullet that might come his way. He breathed freely again, and flew straight as an arrow back toward the island.

Once fairly aloft, Jimmy began to meditate on his adventure. Suddenly an idea came to him. "Gee!" he thought. "I'm sure glad this was such an isolated place we landed in. I don't believe there was a soul within miles. It was a good thing, too. Nobody could get my license number. If any one had noticed it, I might get into a jam with the Canadian officials for landing on Canadian soil without clearing the customs. Well, I guess I had a good excuse, anyway. But just the same, I'm glad nobody could get my number."

As he approached the island, he saw a group of people clustered about the bootlegger's air-

plane. They were examining it carefully. Evidently they had been much mystified by what had taken place. They came thronging eagerly about Jimmy's plane as he set it down in the snow.

Jimmy stepped from his ship, with the medicines in his hand. "I am from the New York *Morning Press,*" he said. "We received a despatch a few hours ago from Smithville, saying that you were cut off here by the ice and that people were very sick with pneumonia and lacked medicines. My paper has sent you the drugs you need, and some directions for using them."

When Jimmy saw the expressions of gratitude that came on the faces of the people about him, he felt that he was more than repaid for anything he had done or could do to help them.

"Come with us," they said. "We want you to talk to some of the people that are in trouble."

Jimmy went with them. Neighbors were caring for the stricken family. One or two of the ailing ones were too sick to be seen. But Jimmy was able to talk briefly to the mother of the family and the oldest boy. He got from them their story, which was a startling tale in itself.

The entire family of seven—father, mother, and five children—had gone, some days previously, to pay a visit to friends on the mainland. The lake was not then frozen so solidly. There were wide, open leads of water, which made it easily possible to reach the mainland. The visit lasted several days. Just before the return home, the great cold wave came. When they were half-way to the island, their motor went dead. A storm came up, and they drifted helplessly before it for twelve hours. The waves washed into their boat until they were all drenched. They could do nothing but sit in their boat and pray that the ice would not crush it. Their situation had finally been discovered, and hardy neighbors, taking their lives in their hands, had launched the most powerful boat on the island and fought their way to them. Thus their lives were saved for the time being, although every one of the seven was stricken with pneumonia, and it looked as though two of the seven might die. There was just a chance that the arrival of the medicine might arrest the disease.

Jimmy was powerfully affected by this recital.

He had seldom been so close to human suffering. Never had he been in touch with people so pitifully situated as these folks had been. Glad, indeed, was he that he had attempted the journey, and that there were great newspapers like his own, to take upon themselves the relief of suffering and the righting of wrong when other agencies failed.

One thing was sure, Jimmy thought. These suffering ones certainly must have medical treatment. And so, taking a hasty departure, he flew back to Smithville and got into touch with his chief, setting the story before him fully.

"Get a doctor and rush him to the island," Mr. Johnson wired back.

Jimmy secured the only physician in the neighborhood, loaded the doctor and the necessary supplies in his plane, and was soon back on the island. The medical assistance came in time. The doctor was able to give immediate treatments and to leave directions for further care.

As for Jimmy himself, nothing was too good for him on the island. The inhabitants would have given him almost anything he asked for, so

grateful were they for his efforts in their behalf. But Jimmy wanted nothing. He was more than repaid by their gratitude and their friendship.

It was with real regret that Jimmy said good-bye to these new-found friends. He was amazed to see how rapidly a mutual feeling of regard had sprung up between these people and himself in such a short time. He understood, of course, that this was because of the unusual conditions under which they had come to know one another. When the time for departure came, he shook hands with them all, promised to come back to the island some time, and then ferried his doctor back to Smithville. And now he went winging his way home across the great Empire State, to his old quarters at the Long Island flying field.

Weeks later Jimmy learned that the rescue efforts he had set in motion had been wholly successful. Every one of the seven sufferers had recovered. But more astonishing than that was the news that for a week after Jimmy's departure, the sick islanders had daily treatment from the Smithville physician. The rum runner from Canada had flown the physician back and

forth every day, as long as it was necessary, in a new plane, and had concluded the matter by paying the doctor handsomely for his services.

Jimmy mused over this for quite a while. "It just shows," he concluded, "that the poet was right when he said there is so much bad in the best of us and so much good in the worst of us that we ought to be mighty careful what we say about anybody."

CHAPTER XV

Jimmy Joins the Caterpillar Club

FOR many weeks after Jimmy's return from this trip he found life tame and colorless, although he was busy enough. There were flying assignments aplenty; but Jimmy found them very ordinary experiences. The day had long since passed when Jimmy could get a thrill merely by making a flight in the air. And that was about all his assignments now amounted to.

One of the first of these flying assignments was a commission to hunt for a lost yacht. A small pleasure craft had disappeared somewhere along the Atlantic coast between New York and Boston. It was not known whether the craft was floating helplessly on the sea, or whether it had put in at some isolated harbor, or whether it might have gone down, with all on board. The

owner was a man of importance. With a small group of friends he had ventured out on the ocean, and the party had utterly vanished. Great anxiety was felt for their safety, and because of the social and business prominence of the missing man, the newspapers joined in the hunt.

Jimmy had little expectation of finding the lost yacht. The story promised to be an easy one to cover. Jimmy would fly until he found the boat or failed to find it. In the one case there would be nothing to write, or next to nothing, whereas in the other there would be little to do, probably, except drop a note to the boat, promising aid, then fly back to land and send out a relief ship, and finally to write a story to the effect that the missing boat had been found.

Jimmy secured permission to take Johnnie with him on this trip. Or, to be more exact, the city editor assigned Johnnie the job of flying with Jimmy. And that was about all the assignment amounted to. They flew for hours, and covered a tremendous stretch of shore-line and coastal waters, but discovered no trace of the missing ship. They got back to the hangar cold,

hungry, and stiff, and Jimmy at least was thoroughly disgusted. To Johnnie the trip was thrilling enough.

Soon afterward Jimmy made a flight that was far more interesting. The managing editor telephoned him to get ready to fly to Auburn, New York, where rioting had broken out in the state prison. Handley was sent along to write a story, for this was a two-man job. The flight up state was ordinary enough, but the riot within the prison walls was far different. Buildings were afire, prisoners were armed, guards were located in strategic positions, and a real battle was in progress within the walls, while outside were ranged troops and policemen, hastily collected and thrown about the institution to prevent a general escape of prisoners.

When Jimmy reached the place he found his was the first airplane on the job. He flew over the prison so that he and Handley could get a good view of what was going on within the walls. He saw in a moment that a real battle was raging. From the building that had fallen into the hands of the rioters bullets were evidently flying

in volleys. Prison guards were answering with an incessant rifle fire. Within the walls things were smashed and broken. Flames were blazing high. Structures had been set on fire by the rioters. It was impossible for firemen to get into the buildings to fight the flames.

Again and again Jimmy circled over the prison, while Handley took snapshots of the scene. Then Jimmy landed his ship and Handley left him, to gather the remainder of his story on the ground and put it on the wire, while Jimmy himself sped back to New York with his photographs.

Long afterward he learned that, altogether unknown to himself, he had played a most important part in subduing the mob and restoring authority and order in the prison. For some of the rioters later told the guards that when Jimmy's plane appeared and began to circle above the prison, the rioters were certain it was an army bomber, hovering above them with intent to blow them all to eternity should they get the upper hand of the guards. That belief broke their fighting spirit. They knew they hadn't a

chance to succeed. And scores of rioters gave up at once.

The prison riot assignment was followed by one to cover a big railroad wreck, and that in turn by an order to assist in a search for four coastwise fliers who had taken off in the South, with intent to race a fast train to New York, and who had utterly disappeared. Jimmy flew for hours along the Atlantic coast, but like other fliers who were engaged in the same task, discovered absolutely no trace of the missing airmen.

By this time Jimmy's engine was in need of overhauling. Indeed, it had somewhat alarmed him on his homeward flight from the search for the lost fliers. But he had made his airport safely, though he felt sure he could not have flown much farther. His engine was not only beginning to miss badly, but it quite evidently needed attention.

At once Jimmy got the managing editor on the telephone. "Mr. Johnson," he said, "the engine in my plane will have to be 'pulled' right away. I can't make another flight until it has had a thorough overhauling. I've flown this ship more

than 500 hours, with only one top overhaul of the motor. In the Air Mail we used to 'pull' the motors every time they had done 500 hours. I just barely got back safely to-day."

"Very well," said the managing editor. "Arrange to have your plane overhauled at once. How long will it take?"

"It's a pretty long job, Mr. Johnson. I should judge it would take two weeks. As long as the ship has to be laid up, we might as well have it checked over thoroughly. While they are working on the engine, we ought to have the wings inspected internally, to see that all the fittings are in shape and to see if any drag wires need tightening. We might need new pins in the hinges of the control surfaces, and some of the control cables may need replacing. The brakes should be taken up, too. In fact, there's no end of things that ought to be checked over. It's a big job, but it must be done. It isn't safe to fly the ship any longer without a complete overhaul."

"That's too bad," said the managing editor, "but if it is necessary have it done. The difficulty is not about the repairs, but about the loss

of the use of the plane. We simply can't get along without a plane. Is there a ship you can hire if the need arises?"

"Yes, sir. There's an old open cockpit *Travelair-Whirlwind* here, Mr. Johnson. It's an old-timer, but it has a good engine and flies well. We can hire it for very little. But I suggest that you do not wait till the need arises, for somebody else might have the plane out at the very moment we want it."

"Then go hire it at once, Jimmy, for as long a time as you think you will be without your ship."

"I think they will rush my work if I ask them to do it," said Jimmy. "I am sure they can have the job finished inside of two weeks. Suppose I charter this old ship for that period."

"Very well, if that is long enough. If it isn't, make it longer. We mustn't be caught without a plane. You never can tell when a story will break that will have to be covered by flight."

Jimmy rented the old *Travelair-Whirlwind* and had it moved to his hangar. His own ship was rolled away to the shop, where the mechanics

could work at it conveniently. Then Jimmy transferred to his new plane all the equipment that he ordinarily carried in his own ship—maps, camera, flash-light, and similar necessary articles. Also, he got out his flying suits, for now he would have to ride in the open.

It was well that Jimmy acted promptly about the old ship; for hardly had he gotten her ready for flight before the managing editor was on the wire again.

"Jimmy," he said, "I'll have to ask you to jump right out on another flight. Is everything all right about your new plane?"

"Everything is O. K., Mr. Johnson. I've had her rolled into my hangar and serviced. I've put all my outfit aboard of her. She's ready to fly at a minute's notice, and so am I. Where do I go this time?"

"Jimmy," said the managing editor, "this is a very serious and important mission which I am about to entrust to you. One of the under secretaries of war from Washington was here to talk to me about certain matters that are to be decided at the peace conference in London, now in

session. I cannot tell you what these things are, but they are affairs of great moment. The under secretary left my office to go to Chicago. I have just found that he left some very important papers behind him. These he absolutely must have in Chicago, where he is going for a conference before he starts for Europe. I could stop him by a telegram sent to his train, but it is highly important that he be in Chicago at the earliest possible moment. He must not be delayed a second. At the same time, he absolutely must have these papers. What I want you to do is to get them into his hands. Deliver them to him in person and to no one else."

"Yes, Mr. Johnson. Have you any suggestions?"

"I've been studying maps and time tables, Jimmy, and I think you can do this nicely. If you fly to Bellefonte, which is right on the lighted airway, you can there take a motor car to Tyrone, which is perhaps thirty miles distant. The train on which the under secretary is traveling is due to stop at Tyrone. There you can board his train and put the papers into his hands. I will wire

him on the train that the papers he left in my office are going ahead by plane, and will be handed him at Tyrone."

"You couldn't possibly have planned the thing out any better, Mr. Johnson," replied Jimmy. "I know that whole section well. From Bellefonte I shall drive to Milesburg, where I hit the new cement road from Lock Haven to Tyrone. It is as fine a strip of cement as there is in the United States. It runs along the Bald Eagle Creek, and for miles is as level as a floor. A motor car can almost fly along there. But you should have a car at the flying field to meet me. The field is several miles outside of the town of Bellefonte, and I'll save a lot of time if the car is on hand when I arrive."

"Very well. I'll telegraph for a car and it will be at the flying field when you arrive. How soon can you take off, and how long will it take you to reach Bellefonte?"

"It's 215 miles from here to Bellefonte, by the lighted airway. I can't expect to get much more than 100 miles an hour out of this plane, and if there is a strong west wind I can't do nearly as

well as that. It will probably take me two hours and a half and perhaps even three hours. I should be in Tyrone within another hour, easily."

"That ought to give you plenty of time, Jimmy. The secretary's train was due to leave Philadelphia at 6: 30 P. M. So it has been under way about fifteen minutes, for it is now quarter of seven. It takes the train five hours and a quarter to reach Tyrone from Philadelphia. That should put it there at 11: 45. If it should he late, it may not reach there before midnight. You should have an hour's leeway."

"I will if I can get off soon," said Jimmy, "but what about the papers? How am I to get hold of them promptly?"

"They should be in your hands within a few minutes. Handley is rushing them to you in a fast taxi. He also has some money for you. You may need more cash than perhaps you have in your pocket."

"Very well, sir. I'll start my engine to warming, and be ready to take off the instant Handley gets here. Good-bye. I'll do my best, Mr. Johnson."

"Good-bye, Jimmy. The best of luck to you. Let me have a wire from you as soon as you put the papers in the secretary's hands."

Jimmy rang off and ran out into the hangar to warm his engine. Then he inspected his ship to make sure he had every necessary piece of equipment. Before he had finished his inspection, a taxi rushed up and Handley stepped out.

"Here are your papers and your money, Jimmy. I suppose the Old Man phoned you about them. I hope you have a quick trip. The best of luck to you."

Jimmy thanked his colleague and stowed the papers and the money in an inner coat pocket, where he could not possibly lose them. Then he pulled on his flying suit, buckled on his parachute, climbed into his cockpit, nodded good-bye to his mechanic, and soared up into the night.

As he left the earth, Jimmy glanced at his clock. It was exactly seven. He looked aloft, into the night. The sky was a deep, dark blue. Stars shone dimly through a slight haze. He could see quite well. "If it stays like this," he thought, "I won't have a bit of trouble to get

there. But I sure do wish I had my own ship. These open cockpit planes certainly are back numbers."

Jimmy centred his attention on his instruments, and was soon satisfied that everything was working perfectly. His plane seemed to function better than he had expected it would. He covered the thirty-five miles to Hadley Field in a fraction more than twenty minutes. "That's almost 105 miles an hour," thought Jimmy. "I didn't believe the old boat would do it. But it will be a different story when I turn west and face the wind. There's only a twelve-mile breeze blowing, they said, but even that will cut me down to ninety miles an hour."

He flew along the old familiar airway. The visibility was good. Beneath him he could see the clustered lights of town after town, as he roared across New Jersey. He knew every town as he passed over it. He checked time and distance as he flew along. It seemed almost no time before he was approaching Easton. He thought of Rand, and the latter's effort to trick him; and he was glad it had happened. It had resulted in

Johnnie Lee's getting the job he was so eager to have.

Westward Jimmy roared along, straight as the crow flies. Beneath him, on hill and meadow, shone the beacon lights, stretching out before him in an endless row of revolving lights. For miles ahead of him he could see these friendly beacons.

Before he knew it he was over Sunbury. He noticed that the haze was increasing rapidly. He thought it might be fog rolling up from the Susquehanna. Soon he was at the Woodward Pass. There was the lofty beacon on the brow of Winkelblech Mountain. Jimmy was high above it. Now he was past the mountain and soaring over Penn's Valley. A very few minutes would put him into Bellefonte. He glanced at his clock. He had made amazingly good time. He was going to reach Bellefonte in close to two and a half hours after all.

Now he was passing Millheim, with its blazing beacon on the crest of Nittany Mountain. The mist was increasing. It bade fair to be bad. But it could not gather quick enough to interfere with him. In no time he would be in Bellefonte.

But suddenly his struts and wires began to hum and vibrate. The vibration rapidly grew worse. The humming grew into a screech. Jimmy's blood began to run cold. His plane was icing up. The thing most feared by airmen was happening to him. Along the edges of his wings, he knew, ice was forming, as the mist froze fast to the fabric. If it continued to form, it would destroy the shape of his wings. They would lose their lifting power. Then nothing under heaven could keep him aloft.

And his wings *were* icing up rapidly. He could tell that from the feeling of the plane beneath him. It no longer slid through the air with its smooth, hawk-like passage. Its flight was becoming uncertain. It trembled and shook. The ship responded but slowly to his control. Desperately he strove to climb. If he could reach either a colder or a warmer stratum of air, the ice would melt. He dared not descend, for beneath him were these terrible mountains. He found it impossible to climb. The ship had utterly lost its power to do so. Yet Jimmy fought with all his ability to force the craft upward. He tried every

trick he had ever heard of, to lift the plane higher. He could not gain an inch.

On the other hand, Jimmy knew full well that he was coming down. His altimeter showed that he was losing altitude steadily. He had been flying at 5,000 feet elevation. Already he was down to 4,500 feet. The mountain beneath him towered up to 2,000 feet. If only he could make the next few miles, and get over the high crests near Bellefonte, he would be all right. The landing field was at an elevation of only 1,200 feet. He believed he could glide down into it in safety.

But suddenly his plane began to spin. It was absolutely out of control. Frantically Jimmy kicked at his rudder, shifted his ailerons, tried every trick he knew of to get the ship out of the spin. He could do absolutely nothing with it. The plane was beyond all control.

With dismay Jimmy realized that he was in a flat spin. He thought of Jack Webster, the mail pilot, who had been caught in exactly the same way just a few miles farther west only a few months previously. The thought made Jimmy's heart stop beating. For the centripetal force of

that spin had held the mail pilot fast in his cockpit, and he had fallen with his plane and been cruelly injured.

Jimmy knew that there was not a second to lose. He must get out of the ship, and get out quick. He thought of Warren Long. He tried to keep his head. He reached for his switches and shut off his ignition, to prevent an explosion when the ship struck. Then he dropped both of his flares. They burst on the night like magnificent rockets, lighting up the mountain below them like noonday. Jimmy took a single look over the side of his ship and began to struggle frantically to get out of his cockpit. Below him was nothing but jagged rocks and menacing tree growths.

Vainly he struggled. He could not lift himself out of the ship. Had the craft been under control, he could have flipped it over and catapulted himself out of the cockpit. But the plane was going down on level keel, whirling about like a top. Again Jimmy struggled. Desperately he fought to get out of his seat. With all his strength he pulled at the sides of the ship and shoved upward with his legs. Still he was held

fast, as by a giant hand. Again he heaved his body upward, convulsively, frantically, with terrible effort. This time he was successful. He gained his feet. As he did so, he could see over the side of his ship.

The mountain was rising up to meet him at a terrifying pace. He was frightfully close to the ground. Snatching up his flash-light, he stepped out on the wing, then dived headlong into space.

He held his breath, fearful lest the whirling plane should strike him. It missed him by inches. He fought for self-control, lest he should pull the rip-cord too soon and cause his own death. Plainly he could see the spinning ship above him. He was going down head first, just as Warren Long had gone. Now he judged he was safe. Instantly he tore at the rip-cord. The steel ring came away in his hand. The parachute snapped out with a crack. It came ballooning open. With a jerk that almost knocked him senseless, Jimmy was snapped into an upright position. Then he went floating straight down.

Instantly he looked below him to see what was there. Then he glanced above, fearful that the

falling ship might drop on him. The wind bore him slightly to one side of the descending plane. Jimmy drew a breath of relief and centred his attention on the ground at his feet. The flares were dying out. He snapped on his flash-light. At first it seemed terribly feeble. Then his eyes grew accustomed to the altered light. He saw he was going to land in some saplings. His feet went crashing down through the tree tops. Branches broke beneath him. They also broke his fall. Jimmy reached out and grabbed a little limb. It tore away from the tree trunk under his weight. But it almost stopped his descent. Desperately he clutched at another branch. This one was tougher and bigger. It held. Jimmy found himself motionless, not ten feet from the ground. He had suffered only a few bruises and scratches. He slid the rest of the way down the tree. He was on his feet, safe and sound.

But he was in a terrible plight. Five minutes more in the air would have put him into Bellefonte in safety. Now he was miles from the flying field, deep in the mountains, in the black of night.

Yet he had one advantage. He was not lost. He knew almost exactly where he was. Even as he was falling he had noticed the beacon at Mingoville. Now as he turned his powerful flash-light this way and that, he saw that he had landed in a notch. He knew it must be the Mingoville notch. And if it was, there was a trail running through it. He tore off the parachute and made his way down the slope of the notch to the bottom. Sure enough, here was the trail. Jimmy knew it led directly into Mingoville.

Recklessly he raced down it. The powerful ray from his flash-light illuminated the path ahead of him. Its beam, almost horizontal, showed him the irregularities of the way better even than the noonday sun would have done. Under other circumstances he would not have dared to run down this rough mountain path as he was now tearing along it. But he used the utmost care in striding, and succeeded in missing loose stones that would have turned his ankle.

Down the trail he ran, panting, sweating, his heart pounding in his breast. But never for a moment did he slacken his speed. In ten minutes

the trail opened into a road. Not far away was a house, and through a window a light was shining.

Jimmy ran toward the house, shouting as he ran. A man stepped out of the door as he came panting up.

"I just jumped out of an airplane," said Jimmy, "and I've got to get to Bellefonte at once. Have you got a car?"

"Sure," said the mountaineer deliberately.

"I'll pay you $25 to take me to Bellefonte. And if you get me there quick, I'll make it $30," said Jimmy. "I'm trying to catch a man for whom I have important despatches. I have to get there in the least time possible."

"I'll take you," said the mountaineer.

"Hurry," panted Jimmy.

The man ran for his barn. The car was inside. It was an old Ford. Jimmy groaned when he saw it. The man started to crank it. To Jimmy it seemed as though the thing would never start. But finally it coughed, then began to explode regularly. The motor sounded good to Jimmy. The man drew on an old overcoat that was in the car. "Get in," he said. Jimmy obeyed with

alacrity. The man let in his clutch and the car rolled out into the road.

"Drive as fast as you can make her go," urged Jimmy. "I have very important despatches for an official of the government. I simply must catch him. He's on his way west. If you hurry, there's a chance."

The man threw caution to the winds. Twenty-five dollars was more money than he had seen at one time in years. He opened the throttle wide. The little Ford tore along the road. It roared and rattled. It bounced and swayed. When it struck a bump it leaped like a rabbit. But the man never slackened his speed and Jimmy clung to the seat desperately.

"I want to go to the flying field," said Jimmy. "There's a car waiting for me there to take me to Tyrone."

"I'll put you there in no time," said the mountaineer.

Jimmy looked at his watch. There was just a possibility that he could make it if everything went well. Jimmy sat in silence. But his heart was beating fast with anxiety and apprehension.

On they raced through the night. The man seemed to know the road perfectly. He tore around sharp bends, dashed into dark hollows, went roaring along the straight stretches, almost without altering his pace. Suddenly he applied the brakes. Then he shot around a sharp corner. Ahead of them lights were gleaming. Jimmy recognized the flying field. He thrust his hand into his pocket, drew out his roll of bills, and counted out $30. As the Ford came to a stop before the hangar, Jimmy thrust the money into the driver's hand, leaped from the car, and raced for a powerful, big motor that stood a few rods distant.

He ran up to the driver, who was sitting on the front seat.

"Is this the car engaged by the New York *Morning Press* to take a man to Tyrone?" he asked.

"Yes," said the driver, in surprise. "He's coming in by plane and ought to have been here some time ago. I'm beginning to be alarmed about him. Know anything about him?"

"I'm the man," said Jimmy, climbing into the

car. "My plane iced up and fell near Mingoville, but I wasn't hurt. Get started, please."

The driver was off like a shot. Jimmy looked at his watch.

"You've got thirty-five minutes to make it," he said.

The driver's only response was to put on more speed. Over rough roads he went spinning, as recklessly as the mountaineer had done in his Ford. But the great car he drove took up shocks and the speed did not seem so great. Jimmy wanted to protest, but when he glanced at the speedometer he thought better of it. He sat in silence, watching the road, as they went roaring along.

Once on the cement highway, the driver opened his throttle, and Jimmy watched the indicator on the dashboard creep up. From forty-five miles an hour it climbed to fifty, to fifty-five, to sixty, to seventy, to eighty miles an hour. And there the speedometer finger stood as though glued to the spot.

They neared Tyrone. Jimmy watched the lights draw near. The driver began to slacken

his speed. They reached the fringes of the town. Close at hand Jimmy heard a long, shrill blast of a locomotive whistle. He knew it was a train blowing for Tyrone. It was going to stop. He glanced at his watch. It lacked two minutes of being 11:45.

"Step on it," begged Jimmy. "That's the train I must catch."

The driver turned a corner and straightened out for a dash. He shoved his speed up and up while Jimmy sat with his heart in his mouth. They could never stop if anything came out of a side street.

But nothing did. They roared on to the station. The train was standing at the platform. The locomotive was panting restlessly, as though eager to be off.

"All aboard," came a deep voice through the night.

Jimmy leaped from the still moving car, and raced down the platform toward the train. The train began to move. Jimmy put everything he had into a last desperate sprint. He reached the car vestibule just as the conductor was closing

the door. Jimmy grabbed the hand rail and swung up on the step. The conductor slammed the door open and grabbed him.

"Is the—assistant secretary—of war—on this train?" panted Jimmy.

"He is," said the conductor.

CHAPTER XVI

The Bootlegger Repays Jimmy's Kindness

JIMMY delivered his papers to the under secretary and got a receipt for them. He left the train at Altoona, wired the managing editor a brief statement of his experiences, then registered at a hotel and went to bed. Utterly worn out by his trying efforts, he slept like a stone and did not awaken until almost noon the following day. Then he ate some breakfast, hired a taxicab, and drove back to Mingoville. He sought out the mountaineer who had driven him to Tyrone on the preceding night, and the two climbed the notch and found the fallen *Travelair*. It was a complete " washout," but Jimmy found that his camera was not much harmed, and he secured his maps, a compass that was still intact, his parachute, and a few other articles. Then he had the mountaineer drive him back to Bellefonte,

whence he made his way by train to New York, where he reported at once to the managing editor.

"So you decided to join the Caterpillar Club, did you?" said Mr. Johnson, speaking jestingly but shaking Jimmy warmly by the hand. "I'm mighty glad to see you back, *mighty glad.* I had some real shivers when I read your telegram saying that your plane had fallen and that you had had to jump for your life. And I was more than amazed to learn that, despite your accident, you still succeeded in accomplishing your errand. It must have been a tight squeeze, Jimmy. I want to know how you did it."

Jimmy fished out one of his topographic maps. "I fell right here," he said, putting his pencil point on the spot that represented the gap above Mingoville. "It was great luck. Had I been a mile distant in almost any direction, I could never have made that train at Tyrone."

"It was a wonderful achievement, Jimmy. I want to hear every particular of the story."

Simply Jimmy related what had happened to him, beginning his tale with the moment when he felt his plane icing up.

"It's a great story, Jimmy," was the managing editor's only comment. "You should have told me about it in your wire last night. I want you to tell Handley what you have just told me. It will make a great story for the *Press*. Of course we must not betray the fact that the under secretary of war lost some state papers. For the purpose of this tale you were merely bearing confidential despatches to him from the *Press*."

So it happened that Jimmy once more figured in the news columns. He disliked so much publicity. But he understood that this was a great story for his particular newspaper to print. The thing that pleased him most was the fact that he had made good. He had delivered the message to Garcia. Nor was Jimmy at all displeased when he found at the end of the week that he had been given a nice bonus for his work.

His own ship was ready for flight once more within the period that Jimmy had designated as the time allowance for the job. But for some time there was again a dearth of interesting assignments. Meanwhile winter was succeeded by early spring, the snow disappeared in the region

of New York, though there was plenty of it left in the far north and would be for weeks to come. Jimmy had the skis on his plane replaced by wheels, for everywhere in the territory that he was likely to cover there was now bare ground.

The first break in this new stretch of uninteresting days came when Jimmy was sent to the pine barrens of New Jersey, to take photographs of a great forest fire that was sweeping through the pines. Jimmy had seen forest fires in Pennsylvania, but nothing like this crown fire that was roaring through the pine woods in a line twenty-five miles long, laying waste not only thousands of acres of timber land, but utterly destroying scores of homes within the forested area.

On another occasion he was sent down the Bay to take photographs of an incoming steamer from Europe, that had effected a daring rescue in mid-ocean of the crew of a sinking freighter.

But the assignment that gave Jimmy the greatest thrill he had had in a long time was an order to fly to the eastern end of Lake Ontario once more, and cover the wreck of a lake steamer. This craft, one of the first ships to make its way from

its winter harborage through the disintegrating ice of the lake, had been caught in a terrible gale and dashed on one of the small islands just off Smithville.

Jimmy was atingle with enthusiasm the instant he got word from the managing editor. It was already well into the evening. Only a flash had come—the merest hint of the great story that eventually unfolded—saying that the steamer had gone aground on the island. The storm had somewhat abated, though it was still blowing hard. But at the Long Island hangar there was small evidence of any disturbance in the air.

"Would it be possible for you to get up there to-night?" asked Mr. Johnson. "Or is it better to wait until morning? If you *could* reach the scene to-night, we could almost certainly get something into our city edition about the wreck. That goes to press at 3:30 in the morning. But we could hold it, or we could get out an extra. What do you think about it, Jimmy?"

"We ought to be able to do it, Mr. Johnson. Of course, it depends upon what the flying is like farther north. But right here the air is quiet

enough. At the very least, I could fly until I was forced down. Then I'd be just so much nearer the spot, and could doubtless get there quickly by motor. The only difficulty is the one of landing. There are no beacon lights to guide me and no illuminated landing fields. A fellow always runs a chance of 'washing out' a ship when he lands in the dark."

"Then you don't think it advisable to attempt the trip to-night?"

"I didn't say that, Mr. Johnson. I'm going to make the trip. But I wanted you to understand the difficulties. I've been over the route, and I can cover it again without difficulty. The night is clear and there is starlight enough to illuminate things a little. I know a number of people at Smithville. I'll wire to the postmaster and ask him to burn a bucket of gasoline in the field where I landed last winter. I can get down all right, I'm sure. But the wire facilities are not very good up there."

"All right. I'll get into touch with the Western Union and see if we can't get a wire ready for your use. You make whatever arrangements are

necessary and get off as soon as you can. How long should it take you to reach Smithville?"

"Unless I have to fight a stiff wind, I ought to make it in two hours and a half. It's almost nine now. I ought to get there by midnight at latest. In two hours more I ought to have a story on the wire for you. We ought to catch the city edition without difficulty."

"Very well, make your arrangements and get off. Have your mechanic telephone me the moment you start."

Jimmy instantly called the Western Union and dictated a telegram to the postmaster of Smithville, asking him to burn a bucket of gasoline in the best landing field possible, when Jimmy approached and circled the town. Unless held up by wind, he said, he should be due in two hours and a half. Then, without waiting for a reply, Jimmy hopped off as soon as he could.

Straight up the Hudson flew Jimmy, speeding along at 120 miles an hour, the pace he knew he must make to land him at Smithville within the designated time. He had no trouble in following the Hudson to Albany, nor in going up the Mo-

hawk to Rome. His troubles began after he left that point and started to follow the railroad to Smithville; for the wind, which had been freshening ever since he left Albany, was now blowing half a gale. But it was a quartering wind for Jimmy and did not delay him nearly so much as a head wind would have done. It did make the flight very rough and bumpy. But Jimmy wisely flew at a good altitude, even though the wind was stiffer up high, and in a little more than two hours and a half was approaching Smithville.

He could make out the tossing expanse of the lake. The lights of Smithville showed him exactly where the village was, and his memory told him just where the field should be in which he had once landed. He nosed his ship downward and started a big swing around the town. Lower and lower he glided, waiting for the expected flare. He was sure his running lights must be visible from the ground, for the night was still perfectly clear, though he was not so certain that the roar of his motor could be heard. The blustering of the wind might drown out the sound. At any rate, they would be looking for him, and they

would see him. So he eased his plane earthward, gliding lower and lower, and waiting for the flare.

Suddenly it came. A burst of flame sprang up, though it was not where Jimmy had expected to see it at all. It lighted up a wide expanse of land. The place looked wet to Jimmy, but he could not be sure about that. At any rate, it undoubtedly was the best landing place possible. He knew his friends would not pick out any other landing place. So Jimmy shoved his stick over a little more, shut off his engine, and glided down. He leveled his ship off, let her lose flying speed, and set her down. Instantly he knew that something was wrong. Water began to fly. His wheels gave forth squdgy, wallowing sounds. In a second his plane bogged down. Over she nosed into the soft ground. His propeller was bent almost double. His under-carriage seemed to give way. His engine plowed into the mud. His tail was standing high in air.

Fortunately Jimmy had braced himself at the first sound of splashing water. He was thrown forward, and though his face was somewhat cut and he suffered several hard bumps, he was not

really injured. Instantly he cut his switch and shut off the gas. Then he leaped from the plane to see what had happened. He found he was in the centre of a great stretch of bog. His plane was hopelessly mired and out of commission for days.

At a distance he saw men with lanterns. He splashed through the swampy ground toward them. They came hurrying in his direction. Foremost was the village postmaster.

"What in thunder did you make a flare in a swamp for?" demanded Jimmy, mad as hops. "My plane is completely out of commission."

"We did just what you asked us to do," replied the postmaster, somewhat taken aback by Jimmy's fiery greeting.

"What I asked you to do!" said Jimmy. "Why, I asked you to light a flare in the best landing place available. Is that your idea of a good landing place for a plane?"

"But in your second telegram you said to put the flare in a swampy place as you would fly still farther north from here and your ship still wore skis."

"My second telegram! My ship still wore skis! I never sent you any second telegram. I never told you I had skis on my ship."

"Well, somebody did. Here's the telegram. It's signed New York *Morning Press.*" And the postmaster fished out of his pocket two yellow telegram blanks and thrust them into Jimmy's hand.

"Somebody has played another trick on me," said Jimmy. "But it won't do any good. My ship may be disabled, but I am not. There's still the telegraph to fall back upon. I can get a message back to New York that way."

"But you'll need your plane to fly out to the wreck."

"Thunderation!" said Jimmy. "Isn't there a boat to be had?"

"Yes, but it's terribly rough. Nobody around here would go out on the lake in a sea like the one that's running now."

"Well, can I get the story of the wreck here?"

"No. Nobody knows a thing about it except that the ship has piled up on the nearest island. We can see her with our glasses. But that's all

we know. That's all we had to send to the newspapers."

"Isn't there any boat that can make it out to the island? I'll pay anybody well who'll take me out."

"The only fellow who would dare it is that bootlegger who held you up on your former trip here. He stops at nothing. He's got a boat specially made for rough weather."

"Where is he?" asked Jimmy. "Can I get in touch with him?"

"Yes, you can. He's been in town for several days. The lake has been too rough even for him. I'll show you where he hangs out." And the postmaster tramped off, with Jimmy at his side and a group of villagers following behind them.

They found the rum runner. The man jumped up suspiciously as they entered the house where he was staying. He glanced from the postmaster to Jimmy and back again. At first he did not know the stranger. But before the postmaster could say a word he remembered Jimmy's face. Instantly he held out his hand.

"Hello, Kid," he said. "I reckon I know what

brings you back here. You gave me a ride across the lake some time ago and I suspect you want one in return? Do I win or lose on that guess?"

"You win," said Jimmy, shaking the fellow's hand. "I want a ride and I want it bad."

"You can get it," said the rum runner. "I've been out studying the lake for the last half hour. The waves is dyin' down fast. I've got a boat that'll make it easy. Once we get in the lee of the island, there won't be nothin' to it—absolutely nothin'."

"How soon can we start?"

"Right off. Come on."

The bootlegger's power boat proved to be a tremendously sturdy craft, with high prow, a deep cabin roofed over, and the tiniest of cockpits in the stern, where there was also an engine that appeared to be of great power. Jimmy and the owner climbed aboard. The latter turned on an electric light.

"Put this on," he said, handing Jimmy a lifebelt. Then he drew on another himself.

He started his motor and let it run quietly a few moments to heat up. Then he opened the

throttle to test it. The engine answered with a roar as powerful as that of Jimmy's plane. The ship strained at her hawsers.

"Now, Kid, you go inside the cabin and sit down. You're likely to get hurt if you don't. If it gets too rough for you, just lay right down in a bunk. Don't take no chances on breakin' an arm or somethin'."

Jimmy obeyed. The rum runner threw off his lines. He opened his throttle. The ship left her little harbor. In a moment she was tossing wildly on the waves of the open lake. The owner gave his engine more gas. The craft forged ahead. Jimmy had never had such a ride. Like a chip in a whirlpool the little boat was thrown about. Now it leaped high upward. Now it dropped downward with a suggestiveness that almost made Jimmy sick. Now it struck a huge wave, that came crashing back over it, and the impact made the sturdy craft tremble and quiver. But all the time it bored straight through the sea, its motor roaring, its propeller whirling wildly as the stern was thrown up out of the water. At times it plunged headlong down the slope of a

great wave, only to go crashing into the following crest. It shook and shivered. It groaned and creaked. But not for one instant did the motor falter or its deep-throated roar subside.

Almost before he knew it, Jimmy found himself in calmer water. The boat still rose and fell. It still rocked and swayed. But there was a perceptible difference in its motions. They were less violent. The sea was not so turbulent. The craft wallowed less in the waves. And the farther they went the smoother their passage continued to grow.

Jimmy rightly guessed that the boat was in the lee of the island. It was, in fact, driving into a little cove or bay, well protected, on the leeward side of the island. When Jimmy looked out and saw land to right and left of him he was amazed. They had made the trip to the island in astonishingly little time. Despite wind and wave, the rum runner's powerful boat had crossed the three miles of water with great speed. Now the craft ran swiftly up the little bay and slid to a grating stop at a little landing at the very end of the cove.

"Come on," said the rum runner, making his boat fast. "I'll take you over to the wreck."

Rapidly he led the way across the island, which just here was hardly a mile wide. Then the two made their way out to the end of a long point of land, on the tip of which lay the stranded vessel. It was driven far up on the sands. Only a few hundred feet of water separated it from the shore. But those few hundred feet were frightful to behold. On this windward side of the island the sea was terrible. Huge waves came roaring in from the open lake, to crash against the helpless ship and go thundering completely over it. Jimmy looked at the scene with an awe that bordered on terror. Never before had he beheld such an exhibition of the fury of wind and wave.

Near by was a cottage. Lights still shone in the windows.

"The folks in that house ought to be able to tell us something about the wreck," shouted Jimmy to his companion. "Let's go talk to them."

They walked to the cottage and knocked at the door. It was opened promptly and they

stepped inside. A great fire was blazing in the hearth. Before it sat a man half dressed. Articles of clothing were hanging before the blaze. The man seemed distressed.

Jimmy introduced himself to the cottager. The man recalled him at once as the flier who had brought help from the city during the winter.

"What brings you here now? Is there anything I can do for you?" asked the islander.

"I came to get the story of this stranded vessel. Perhaps you can tell me something about it."

"I can," said the cottager, "but this man can tell you far more. He is the mate of the ship. He was swept overboard and was all but drowned before we got him ashore. He can tell you everything."

Jimmy sat down and began to talk to him. Reluctantly at first, then eagerly as he found relief in conversation, the man related his story: how the ship had put out from port at the first possible moment with a cargo of freight and a considerable passenger list; how progress had been incredibly slow because of the heavy ice;

how the storm had caught them only a few miles off shore; how the steamer's propeller had been broken by ice; and how she had then drifted helplessly before the wind, finally to crash on the beach before them, with the loss of many lives, and the probable loss of many more. For it was impossible to get to the ship with the sea as it was, and the vessel was breaking up. It was only a question of hours until it would go to pieces. Of all those washed overboard—probably a score or more—the mate was the only one who had reached the shore alive.

For an hour Jimmy talked with the downcast sailor. He plied the man with a hundred questions. He got every detail of the trip, from the start to the present moment. And he secured many names of passengers and crew. Then thanking the sailor and the cottager, he took his leave, accompanied by his rum-running friend.

"Have you got all the facts you want?" asked the latter.

"I've got all I have time to get now. I must put what I have on the wire. Later I can get more details and in the morning some pictures."

They hurried to the boat, boarded it, and crossed to the mainland, running before wind and wave. Their speed amazed Jimmy. They made the crossing in no time at all. Jimmy rushed to the telegraph office, which he found open and waiting for him, with an extra operator who had been ordered on duty especially to forward Jimmy's story. Jimmy wrote a few lines and handed them to the operator. Then, with the telegraph key clicking in his ear, he wrote and wrote, tearing off sheet after sheet from his pad and handing each sheet to the operator as fast as it was written. When he laid the last sheet before the operator he glanced at the clock. It was half past two. Jimmy smiled with happiness. He had "caught" the city edition.

As Jimmy and his new friend came out of the telegraph office they heard the hum of a plane overhead. Down came a ship, circling, and settling cautiously lower. Then it dropped a flare, turned its landing lights on, and glided safely to earth in a big field. Two men got out of it—the pilot and a passenger. They hurried over to

Jimmy and the rum runner. In the dark Jimmy did not recognize them.

"Is there any way we can get to the island, where that ship is wrecked?" demanded one of them. "We'll pay well to get there."

Jimmy bristled with anger as he heard the voice. It was Rand's. Jimmy's rum-running friend turned to him. "What about it? Shall I take them over?"

"Not if you're a friend of mine," said Jimmy. "This fellow is my worst enemy. He has played me no end of dirty tricks, and I think he played me one this very night."

"Then I don't take him," said the bootlegger. "Let him get to the island the best way he can."

They turned away from the newcomers. Rand was swearing furiously. But Jimmy paid no attention to him and presently was beyond the sound of his voice. Briefly he told his friend of the difficulties he had had with Rand. "I'm just as sure as I can be that now I know who sent that second telegram here that pulled me down in the bog and put my ship out of commission. I don't know what I am going to do, for I had expected

to fly out to the ship and get some photographs at sunrise and then rush them to New York. The local correspondents can finish up the story."

"Don't you worry about no pictures," said the rum runner. "I got my airplane all fixed up—new motor and everything. She's right at hand, and come daybreak we'll go git them pictures and then start for New York. I got business down that way and I'll be glad to make the trip. You done me a fine service once and I ain't never goin' to forget it."

CHAPTER XVII

Jimmy Triumphs Over Rand

WHEN Jimmy and his lawless friend from the border reached New York late the next morning, with the first photographs of the wreck to arrive in that city, and with some additional facts about the wreck, the rum runner wanted to say good-bye at once, but Jimmy would not consent to this. He insisted that they go see the managing editor. Finally the bootlegger, whose name was LaRoche, agreed, and early that afternoon the two met again at the *Morning Press* building. They were at once admitted to the managing editor's office.

"Well, Jimmy, you seem to have had another interesting adventure," said Mr. Johnson, as he welcomed his subordinate. "I'm mighty glad you got out of it safe and sound."

Jimmy introduced LaRoche to Mr. Johnson,

then said: "You speak of my having another adventure, Mr. Johnson. What do you refer to?"

"Why, to your trip out to the island through the storm last night. I judge that was an experience you won't soon forget."

"For me it was an adventure," said Jimmy, "though to Mr. LaRoche it was a very ordinary experience, I judge. I shall not soon forget it. Nor shall I forget the other adventure I had."

"The other adventure! You speak in riddles, Jimmy."

Jimmy told his chief about the beacon in the bog, about his landing in a swamp and being hopelessly disabled, and about the two telegrams received by the postmaster of Smithville.

While Jimmy was talking he could not fail to notice the countenance of his chief. The most extraordinary expressions followed one another on the managing editor's face. Interest, amazement, concern, and finally an expression of angry determination were all momentarily portrayed on Mr. Johnson's expressive countenance.

"Now I understand everything," said he.

Jimmy waited for enlightenment.

"While you have been gathering a story of heroism and death in the north," said the managing editor, "I have been picking up one of cowardice and treachery here in New York. I didn't fully understand what it all meant until I heard what you have just told me. Now I comprehend it all. Your story and mine make a beautiful mosaic. They dovetail together into a completed tale. Would you like to hear *my* end of that tale?"

Jimmy was all eagerness. "I can't imagine what you have in mind," said Jimmy, "but of course I want to hear about it."

"Very well, here it is. Your friend, Mr. LaRoche, will be interested, too. He has had some small part in the story, too."

Both the managing editor's hearers looked their astonishment.

"When you set out for Smithville last night, Jimmy," began the managing editor, "we did everything we could possibly do at this end to make your flight both safe and successful. I sent you reluctantly. I knew flying conditions could

not be any too good in a region where a great steamer had just been blown ashore. The fact is, I was a little conscience-smitten, I guess. Your narrow escape at Mingoville has been constantly in my mind. But I allowed you to go—yes, I even urged you to go—and after you had taken off I began to worry about you and so I quite naturally left nothing undone to insure the safety of your trip."

Both Jimmy and his companion were completely mystified. They sat in silent expectation, waiting for what was to follow.

" First of all," continued Mr. Johnson, " I sent Johnnie Lee over to your hangar. There was nothing in particular for him to do except to be there in case you should send back any radio messages as you flew. You see, I have learned about your Wireless Patrol and how skilful all you boys are with the wireless. So it occurred to me that Johnnie might be able to handle a radio conversation better than almost anybody else on the staff. Johnnie went over to the flying field immediately."

The managing editor paused as though to ar-

range his thoughts. After a moment he continued. "Johnnie seems to be very wide awake. He evidently nosed around the field and soon learned that the *Despatch* man was having trouble to get his plane into the air. The *Despatch* no doubt received the flash about the wreck of the lake steamer at the same time we got it. Its plane should have taken the air as quickly as you got aloft with our ship, Jimmy. But something went wrong with it. An hour after you had departed, the pilot and his mechanics were still working desperately to get the ship into shape to fly. Johnnie didn't know what was wrong, and of course he didn't make inquiries in a rival's hangar. But he did discover that the reporter who was to be flown in the plane was the fellow he had seen at the coal mine disaster at Krebs. He knew that the fellow had played you some dirty tricks, and he decided he would keep an eye on him."

"You bet Johnnie would," interrupted Jimmy. "He's a real friend."

"Well," continued the managing editor, "this chap Johnnie was watching. Rand presently

went to the office in his hangar. Johnnie strolled over that way and peeped in. Rand was standing by a closet in the rear of the office. The door was open only part way, but Johnnie could see that Rand was talking into a telephone receiver that stood on a shelf in this closet. This seemed queer to Johnnie, because there on the desk was the regular instrument. Johnnie tiptoed close to a window, which was open a crack for ventilation. He was in the dark and could not be seen. He heard Rand say something about 'skis on a plane' and 'flying farther north from there.' Johnnie of course couldn't make anything out of that, and quite naturally he never connected the message with your flight."

Jimmy drew a long breath. "I understand the whole story now," he said.

"Not quite, Jimmy. Let me go on. Rand got off eventually and the force at Rand's hangar went home. Johnnie came back to our hangar. But there wasn't a thing to do, aside from making frequent inquiries at the radio office, and he got to wondering about that queer telephone he had seen Rand use. So he picked up a flash-light,

slipped into Rand's office, which was unlocked, and went to the closet. It was locked. Johnnie had his keys and with one of them was able after a little effort to unlock the closet. There was the telephone, on a separate wire, which came up through the floor. You know how ramshackle those hangars are. Well, Johnnie was able to trace that wire. And where do you think it ran?"

"I don't know," said Jimmy.

"It was spliced to our own telephone wire. In short, Rand had tapped the wire in our hangar, so he could overhear our conversations."

"Quite evident," said Jimmy. "But what I don't understand is why Rand was *talking* on our wire. That would give him away, sure."

"I couldn't have understood it either, had it not been that I had occasion to talk to a Western Union man. I had already arranged to have the wire at Smithville opened for you, Jimmy, but about three hours after you took off I had to call the telegraph people again. And it was only by the merest chance that the matter was mentioned then. The fellow I was talking with remarked that he had just come down from Canada and

that unless my reporter was going pretty far north, he would have trouble landing on skis. I didn't know what he meant. That brought out the fact that a second telegram had been sent about the matter of a landing ground at Smithville. I knew you had no skis on your plane now and I said there must be a mistake about the message. The telegraph official assured me that you had sent a second message from Long Island. When I checked up on the time the message was sent, I saw right away what had happened. Some one had sent a message in your name. We traced the call and it came over our wire."

The managing editor paused. "Please go on," said Jimmy, who was sitting tensely on the edge of his chair.

"Well, I got in touch with Johnnie over at the field. He had just ferreted out the secret telephone wire. It was easy enough then to put two and two together. But the thing that worried me was the plight you were in, Jimmy. I knew that unless you had had a mishap on the way, you were already at Smithville. Whatever was to happen had already happened. I got a

connection on the telephone with the postmaster up there—the fellow you said you knew—and he said you had gone out on the lake with Mr. La-Roche here, and that nobody in the town expected to see you come back alive. So you can understand how anxious I was and how tremendously pleased I was when your story began to come in. By the way, Jimmy, what about your plane? What is to be done about it?"

"Oh, I have already arranged about that. The plane isn't really hurt any. The propeller is gone, and maybe the undercarriage is damaged some. But the ship itself is all right. I left directions for the plane to be pulled out on firm land and cleaned thoroughly. They are to wire me as soon as this is done and tell me if anything is needed. Then I shall go up there with my mechanic and put on a new prop and make any other repairs necessary. I don't think the job will amount to much."

"You were mighty lucky, Jimmy, and we were all tremendously relieved when we found you were safe. Of course we are pleased about the story. We scooped the town, as I suppose you

already know. But that was a small matter alongside of your safety."

"What I want to know," said Jimmy, trying to change the subject, "is what to do about Rand. He is a poor loser. Every time I beat him he tries some underhand work. What am I to do about it? I could beat him up, and I once threatened to do it; but that would not stop him from attempting these dirty tricks."

"Jimmy," said Mr. Johnson, "you are not to do anything about Rand. I will attend to that. In fact, I have already attended to it. Here is a letter I have written to him. In it I have told him that we have absolute proof of his dirty work that might well have cost you your life at Smithville. What he did will without doubt constitute a crime in the eyes of the law. I have told him as much. I have also told him that unless he resigns from the *Despatch,* gets out of newspaper work entirely, and promises never again to attempt in any way to interfere with you, I shall hale him into court and stop at nothing until I see him behind prison bars."

"Do you think he will resign?"

"Jimmy, if this case ever went to court, and we spread on the records all we know, not only about this case but about other dastardly things he has done, Rand would be so discredited that no editor would ever again hire him, and he might find it difficult to get a job of any sort whatever. I'm mightily mistaken about Rand if he doesn't quit cold when he gets my letter. But if he doesn't, I shall proceed against him at once."

Jimmy left the office both happy and sorry. He was glad he was to be free from the competition of such a man as Rand. He was sorry that through him misfortune came upon another—even Rand. He said as much to LaRoche.

"Forget, Kid," replied the rum runner. "You're a square shooter clear through. Otherwise I wouldn't never have had nothin' to do with you. But this other fellow is only a rattlesnake. You hadn't nothing to do with his downfall. He brought that on himself. And if it hadn't come now, through you, it would have come later through some one else."

Jimmy walked with LaRoche to the latter's headquarters in a tough riverfront hotel. "You've

been a real friend to me," he said. "I appreciate it. I don't know how to thank you."

"I don't want no thanks. You've been my friend. Don't you suppose I like the friendship of a kid as white as you are? When you get in trouble again, let me know. You can always count on Henri LaRoche."

The rum runner held out his hand. Jimmy shook it warmly. "Good-bye and good luck to you," he said.

At the end of the week Jimmy sauntered into the office to get his pay. There was a notice conspicuously posted on the bulletin board. He stopped to read it. Then a great smile came over his countenance, for this is what he read:

STAFF PROMOTIONS

Johnnie Lee and Jimmy Donnelly, for excellent work in connection with the coverage of the steamship disaster in Lake Ontario, will each receive a bonus of $50, together with an increase in salary, same to be effective at once.

TOM JOHNSON,
Managing Editor.

FAMOUS ANIMAL STORIES

By

ARTHUR C. BARTLETT

SPUNK, LEADER OF THE DOG TEAM. A story of dog sled racing.

Spunk — strong, masterful, intelligent Spunk — won his place in the heart of his master and as a leader of the dog team through weeks and months of training.

THE SEA DOG.

"Pieface" was a noble, brave, self-sacrificing sea dog who loved his calling.

GAME-LEGS. The biography of a horse with a heart.

In this story of a lad whose daily companion was his horse, one is constantly catching glimpses of those qualities which make for love and trust.

THE RUNAWAY DOG TEAM.

Much interest is centered in the development of the dog for sled work. Many of the experiences connected with the training and racing period are told in this story.

GUMPY, SON OF SPUNK. The story of a misfit dog team.

The story of a boy, a problem to the people of his town because his energies were being misdirected. After acquiring "GUMPY" and later a couple of cast-off dogs to make up a three-dog team, he does errands to help his mother support the family and later trains the dogs and enters them in the handicap race — and wins.

Colored Jackets **Attractive Illustrations**

$1.75 each

BOOKS BY

Frank H. Cheley

BOY RIDERS OF THE ROCKIES; or CAMPING ON TOP OF THE WORLD.

14 full page illustrations from the author's own photographs. 336 Pages. $2.00.

A true story of a wonderful boys' camp high up in the Colorado Rockies where annually scores of boys are living again the grand old days of Buffalo Bill and Kit Carson.

THE BOYS' BOOK OF CAMP FIRES.

Illustrated by the author's own pictures of camp-fire life. 400 Pages. $2.50.

A standard and beautifully illustrated book of camp life with advice on all matters pertaining to it. As a camp owner, a director of boys' activities for many years, the author knows what advice is needed and how to give it interestingly.

CAMP-FIRE YARNS; or FAMOUS STORIES TOLD AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE.

352 Pages. $1.50.

No boy or man has ever forgotten those evenings he spent before the camp-fire, or forgot the stories which were told.

Mr. Cheley's selections are the choicest which have ever been issued.

THE MYSTERY OF CHIMNEY ROCK.

320 Pages. $1.75.

A fascinating story of the search for gold in the land of the Ute Indians in the days of '49. The story of this wonderful period of our country's history should interest every boy.

FOR FATHERS.

THE JOB OF BEING A DAD.

352 Pages. $1.75.

DAD, WHOSE BOY IS YOURS?

160 Pages. $1.25. (Pocket size, limp covers.)

Every father in the country should read these truly remarkable books. The author is the President of the Father and Son League of America, and has had long experience in work with boys.

He says: "This job of being a dad to a real boy is really the biggest job in the world," and he proves it.

BOOKS BY

Walter P. Eaton

THE BOY SCOUTS OF BERKSHIRE. A story of how the Chipmunk Patrol was started, what they did and how they did it.

BOY SCOUTS IN THE DISMAL SWAMP. A story of Boy Scouting in the Dismal Swamp.

BOY SCOUTS IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS. A story of a hike over the Franconia and Presidential Ranges.

BOY SCOUTS OF THE WILDCAT PATROL. A story of Boy Scouting.

PEANUT—CUB REPORTER. A Boy Scout's life and adventures on a newspaper.

BOY SCOUTS IN GLACIER PARK. The adventures of two young Easterners in the heart of the High Rockies.

BOY SCOUTS AT CRATER LAKE. A Story of the High Cascades.

BOY SCOUTS ON KATAHDIN. A story of the Maine Woods.

HAWKEYE'S ROOMMATE. A story of the very life of a truly American prep school—how the boys studied, played and found lasting friendships and learned the lessons of life.

By William Drysdale

The Famous

"Brain and Brawn" Series

No boy should grow up without reading these books

The Young Reporter

A STORY OF PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE. 300 pp.

A genuine boys' book for genuine boys. Full of life, clean, clear cut and inspiring. It will enlist the interest of every stirring and wide-awake boy.

The Fast Mail

THE STORY OF A TRAIN BOY. 328 pp.

The story of the adventures of a boy who fought his way to success with clean grit and good sense, accomplishing what is within the power of every American boy if he sets about it. It is full of movement, sound in sentiment, and wholesome in character.

The Beach Patrol

A STORY OF THE LIFE-SAVING SERVICE. 318 pp.

A spirited picture of the labors and dangers to which members of the life-saving service are exposed and which few realize.

The Young Supercargo

A STORY OF THE MERCHANT MARINE. 352 pp.

This book has all of the interest of "Oliver Optic's" books, with none of their improbabilities.

The Volumes are Fully Illustrated.

W. A. WILDE COMPANY

Boston and Chicago

By Everett T. Tomlinson

War of the Revolution Series

Each Volume Fully Illustrated
Price, Cloth,

Every boy who has ever read these historical stories by Dr. Tomlinson will say that this series of books is one of the best which has ever been written, for the stories are patriotic, interesting, and instructive. The heroes in each of the books are resourceful and devoted to the best interests of their country. Any boy who has never read these stories has much to look forward to.

The series consists of four volumes:—

Three Colonial Boys. A Story of the Times of '76

Three Young Continentals. A Story of the American Revolution.

Washington's Young Aids. A Story of the New Jersey Campaign of 1776-1777.

Two Young Patriots; or, Boys of the Frontier. A Story of Burgoyne's Invasion.